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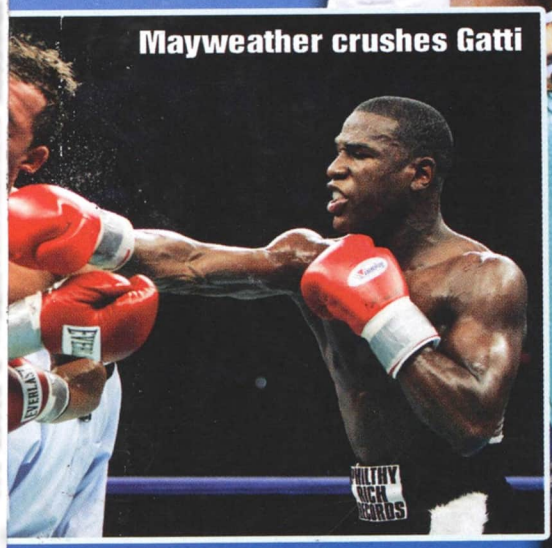

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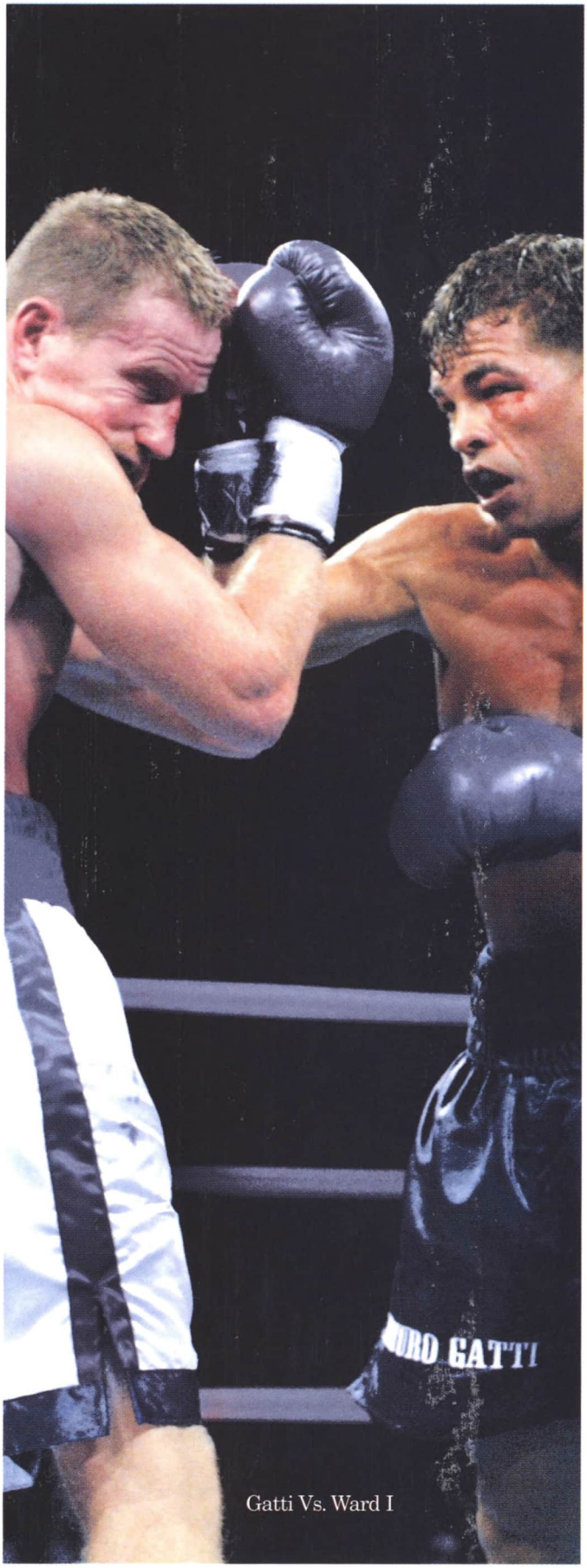

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The RING
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CONTENTS

Vol. 5, 2005

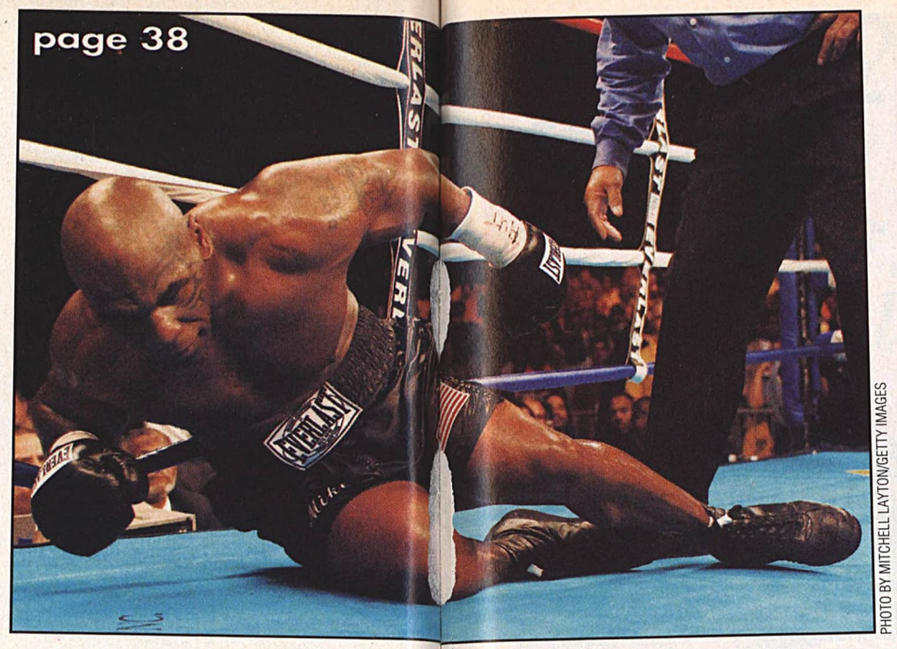

PHOTO BY MITCHELL LAYTON/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS/HBO

FEATURES

26 **"PRETTY BOY" FLOYD**
Just As Great As He Says He Is … Maybe Even Better
By David Mayo

32 **TARVER REGAINS THE LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP**
But Topping Roy Jones Kayo Could Be The Magic Man's Toughest Trick
By Don Stewart

38 **IS TYSON HALL OF FAME BOUND?**
The Only Question Left To Ask
By Don Stradley

45 **THE POUND-FOR-POUND ELITE**
An In-Depth Look At Today's 10 Best Fighters
By William Dettloff

106 **TOO MUCH DISCRETION, NOT ENOUGH VALOR**
Analyzing The Recent Trend Of Hitters Becoming Quitters
By Eric Raskin

Floyd Mayweather by Will Hart/HBO, Mayweather-Gatti by Al Bello/Getty Images

Cover Design: Monica Fisher

Ringside Reports And Analyses

114 FIGHTER OF THE MONTH & RINGSIDE REPORTS

Ratings

13 RATINGS ANAYLSIS

14 THE RING'S INTERNATIONAL RATINGS AND RECORDS

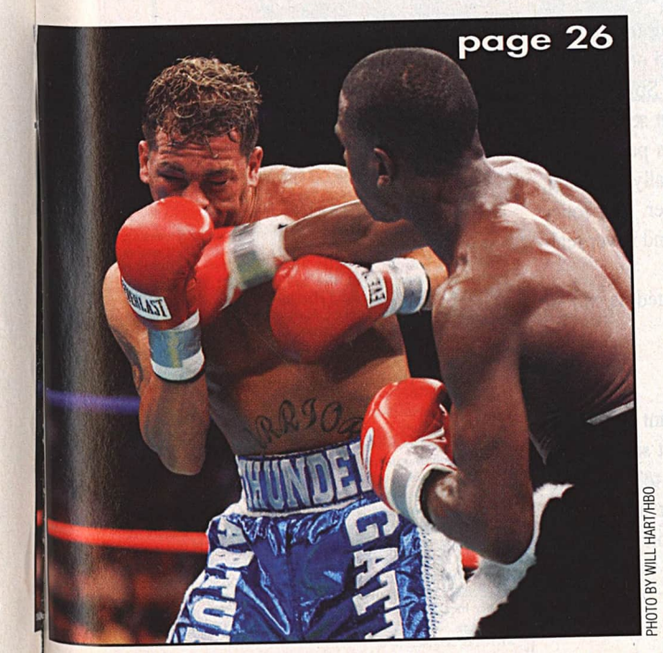

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

DEPARTMENTS

6 RINGSIDE, *by Nigel Collins*

8 ROUND ONE

16 RYAN OUT LOUD, *by Jeff Ryan*

18 DIGGING DEEP, *by Ivan Goldman*

20 CAMERA CLICKS

22 NEW FACES: Junior Middleweight Derek Ennis, *by Frank Krewda*

112 WORLDWIDE FIGHT RESULTS

124 FLASHBACK: February 1963

126 THE FIGHT DOCTOR, *by Margaret Goodman, M.D.*

128 COME OUT WRITING

130 LOOKING AHEAD, *by Joe Santoliquito*

RINGSIDE

Thank goodness for Ricky Hatton. Among the select group of fighters who have attracted capacity crowds to major venues in recent month, only the Manchester "Hit Man" emerged victorious.

The downfall of the ticket-sellers began on February 5 when Cory Spinks attracted 22,370 fans to the Savvis Center in St., Louis for his welterweight title defense against Zab Judah. Nine rounds later, Judah was the new welterweight champion and St. Louis was suddenly a no-boxing zone again. Next came the Winky Wright-Felix Trinidad bout that drew a packed house at the MGM Grand and, even more significantly, generated 510,000 pay-per-views buys. Wright handed "Tito" a boxing lesson and the Sweet Science lost another gate attraction when Trinidad re-retired following his uncompromising defeat.

The most unlikely fighter to draw a capacity crowd this year was Andrew Golota, who lured 20,126 paying customers to Chicago's United Center for his May 21 bout with Lamon Brewster. Fifty-three seconds after the opening bell, the man largely responsible for the "Windy City's" boxing revival had been down three times and ruled unfit to continue.

On June 25, Arturo Gatti racked up his fifth straight sellout at Atlantic City's 12,000-seat Boardwalk Hall for his showdown with Floyd Mayweather. The PPV also did well, with 340,000 households purchasing the fight. But after Mayweather thrashed Gatti so convincingly, Arturo's streak of SRO crowds in A.C. could be in serious jeopardy.

It would be nice if Judah, Wright, Brewster, and Mayweather had inherited their victims' ability to attract the paying public, but, alas, that probably won't happen unless they are pitted against a fresh crop of popular ticket-sellers. On the other hand, Hatton, who sold 22,000 tickets for his fight with Kostya Tszyu in three hours, could probably fill any arena in Britain, regardless of who is in the other corner.

There are, of course, a lot of factors involved in which fighters draw well and which do not, but it's worth noting that all the fighters who knocked off the gate-attractions were African-Americans, while the losers, except for Spinks, were either white or Latino. You don't hear too much talk about it, but it seems fairly clear that black Americans do not currently support their fighters as passionately as whites and Latino fans do, at least not with their wallets. Generally speaking, it's been that way since Mike Tyson ceased to be a regular performer. Roy Jones enjoyed some late-career support, but it was nothing overwhelming and never really offset the Roy-cott element among hardcore fans.

How ironic that boxing, the first major sport to be racially integrated, is still so dependent on ethnic loyalties to keep the turnstiles spinning.

***

In the October issue, I took HBO's Jim Lampley and Larry Merchant to task for failing to note that THE RING light heavyweight championship was at stake in the Antonio Tarver-Glen Johnson rematch. On the next HBO boxing telecast (the Mayweather-Gatti PPV), Lampley went out of his way to apologize and set the record straight. Thanks, Lamps. It's reassuring to know that the voice of HBO boxing is a man of such scrupulous integrity.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

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(215) 643-6385
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ADVERTISING ASSISTANT
Dianne Weber

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London Publishing Co.
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ROUND ONE

CINDERELLA MAN ON THE ROPES

With an $88-million budget, former Academy Award winners Russell Crowe and Rene Zellweger in the starring roles, former Oscar-winning director Ron Howard drawing up the plays from the sideline, and a release date timed to appeal to a summer movie crowd that's known for being as fond of feel-good stories as it is stadium seating and super-sized orders of nachos, *Cinderella Man* figured to be one of the year's big hits. Instead, it spent its first month sputtering like Jim Braddock in the middle stage of his up-and-down-and-up career.

The flick finished fourth in ticket sales during its opening weekend, and earned a disappointing $50-million in its first four weeks. So confident in the film's quality—and so desperate to lure viewers—was AMC Theatres that the nation's second-largest theater chain began offering a money-back guarantee. As of June 24, if you saw *Cinderella Man* on an AMC screen and hated it, you'd get a refund, simple as that. (If only the movie houses screening *The Island* had been so charitable.)

So what's to blame for *Cinderella Man*, which received mostly positive reviews from the critics, turning into a box-office pumpkin? Well, a few things. For starters, it didn't help that the hotheaded Crowe had another of his infamous meltdowns, this one a telephone-tossing tantrum at a New York hotel, three days after the movie's June 3 release. Often perceived as arrogant and self-involved, the actor is a difficult guy to like even when he's behaving himself, and some moviegoers may have decided they didn't want to support another one of his projects—at least for now.

Second, despite the film's happy ending and PG-13 rating, its content—brutal ring battles and a family struggling to eat, pay the electric bill, and keep from freezing to death during The Great Depression—might have been considered too adult-oriented and all too realistic, not the kind of summer-movie escapism provided by *Batman Begins*, *War of the Worlds*, and the like.

Cinderella Man *needs a lift*

And third, the widespread popularity of *Million Dollar Baby* may have hurt, rather than helped, *Cinderella Man*. Boxing has always been anathema to much of the mainstream. Perhaps a large segment of the public determined that it wasn't ready for another journey through the dark world of the Sweet Science, particularly after enduring *Million Dollar Baby*'s emotional subject matter and gut-wrenching images.

Don't be surprised, though, if the rumors prove true and Universal Pictures re-releases *Cinderella Man* in the fall. That would not only give the film a chance to reconnect with audiences, but also assure that it's not forgotten by Oscar voters, who have a tendency to overlook movies that debut in the first half of the year. (Though admittedly, it's difficult to envision a sports flick, let alone a *boxing* movie, being nominated for Best Picture two years in a row.) Maybe the film, like Braddock himself, can't be written off as a disappointment before getting one more chance to turn things around.

—Jeff Ryan

LETTERLOUGH SHOT TO DEATH

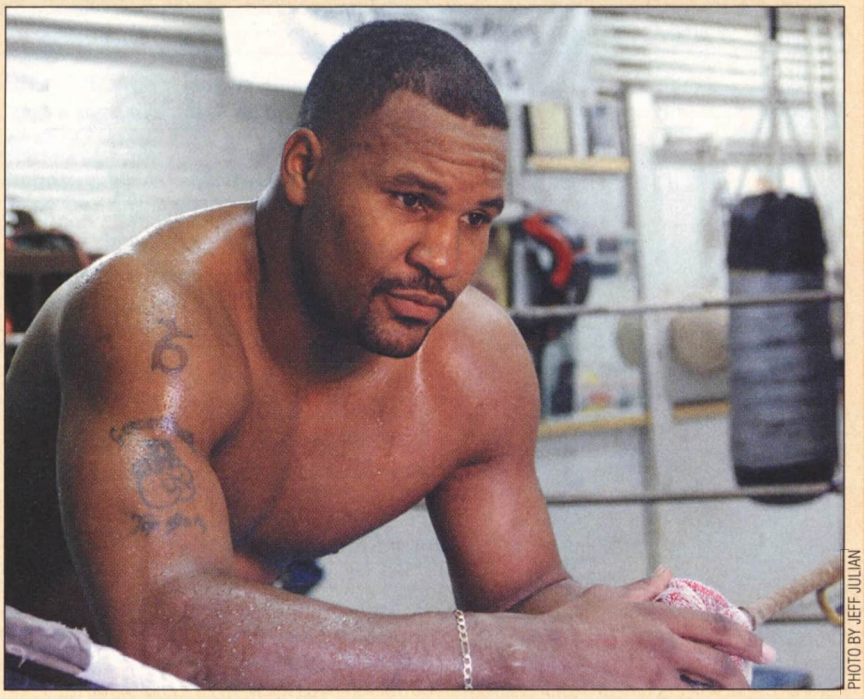


PHOTO BY JEFF JULIAN

Letterlough shot dead at age 35 outside of bar

Having quietly walked away from the sport after a TKO win over Eric Starr last October, Julian Letterlough seemed to be finding the peace that had forever eluded him.

The former light heavyweight contender, who didn't meet his father until running into him while both were in the same prison, was spending more time with his 15-year-old son, Julian Jr. He got married September 9. Letterlough later told trainer Marshall Kauffman that in his new wife, Joanna, he'd finally found a woman who "got" him.

"I hadn't seen Julian that happy in a long time," Kauffman said.

But trouble never lingered too far from the ex-convict. In the wee hours of the morning on July 8, Letterlough was fatally shot outside of a bar in Reading, Pennsylvania, where he'd lived and trained since being released from prison in 1998.

Letterlough's autopsy revealed that he was shot five times. The final wound was to the back of the head. He was 35.

Captain Francis F. Drexler of the Reading criminal investigations division told the *Reading Eagle* that the two police officers who first arrived on the scene witnessed a man leaning over a car and shooting. One officer began to chase the shooter and another suspect, but stopped near where they had been standing to find the body of Letterlough between two cars on a sidewalk.

The officer continued chasing the two suspects down a nearby street. Both stopped and pointed guns at him. The officer fired three times, hitting Kenneth Blunt, 23, in the leg and shoulder. The other suspect escaped. A stolen .40-caliber semiautomatic and a .32-caliber revolver were later recovered nearby.

Blunt, 23, was treated and imprisoned in lieu of $1-million bail on attempted homicide, assault, and related charges in the confrontation with the officers. As of three days after the murder, he had not been charged in Letterlough's slaying.

"It's a shame," Kauffman said. "It really is. I feel really sad for his family. His family, his wife, his son: Those are the ones I really feel bad about. His wife's a mess. She can't even talk. That's who I really feel bad for."

Letterlough, 21-5-3 (20), who bore a striking physical resemblance to Mike Tyson, learned to box in prison while doing seven years for assaulting a police officer. He turned pro in October of 1998 at age 28 and won his first 14 bouts, all by knockout. "Mr. KO" then went 7-5-3 during his final 15 fights, including an eighth-round TKO loss to Vassily Jirov in an unsuccessful 2001 bid for the IBF cruiserweight title.

Management squabbles and problems against taller boxers affected him the past few years. Nerve damage in his left elbow, caused by a bone-chip fracture suffered during his youth, prevented him from fully extending his arm when he jabbed.

Still, win or lose, he usually made for memorable bouts. Letterlough got up from two knockdowns to stop Demetrious Jenkins in 2000, went down twice while and floored Julio Gonzalez three times in a decision loss the following year, and dropped Richard Hall before getting stopped in the second round in 2003.

His promoter, Alfredo Marchio, lined up a July 1 fight against George Khalid Jones on ESPN2, but couldn't talk Letterlough out of retirement.

"I'm saddened," Marchio said. "I think a dream could've been fulfilled. My dream was to make him world champion. I still think he had it in him. It would have been nice if he could've stayed in boxing."

It's been a rough stretch for Reading-area boxing. Journeyman Jose "Chito" Aponte, 18-26-3(6), was found dead July 5 of undetermined causes. Aponte, 33, hadn't fought since June of 2003. The Puerto Rican native faced several name opponents, including Paul Spadafora, Tracy Harris Patterson, Muhammad Abdullaev, Leo Dorin, Teddy Reid, and Yusaf Mack.

Letterlough's first trainer, James "Corky" Taylor, died June 27 at age 47 of an apparent heart attack. Taylor also trained Reading's Steve Little, the former WBA super middleweight champion who died of colon cancer in 2000.

—Don Stewart

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
6/16/05	Demetrius Hopkins W 8 Roberto Valenzuela	HBO-L	jw	C	B	C+
Hey Bernard, how about showing this kid how to turn his punches over? He can't break an egg						
6/16/05	Jhonny Gonzalez W 10 Aldolfo Landeros	HBO-L	jf	C	D+	C
Anyone else think it's time Gonzalez stepped up the competition a bit?						
6/17/05	Steven Luevano KO 5 Genaro Tranzancos	Telefutura	f	C+	B+	C
Unusual display of power from Luevano; let's see if it continues						
6/17/05	Bobby Pacquiao KO 7 Carlos Navarro	ESPN2	jl	C+	B	B-
Hey, ref, what does a guy have to do to let you know he doesn't want to fight anymore?						
6/18/05	Ike Quartey W 10 Verno Phillips	HBO	jm	B-	A-	B+
Even if the decision could have gone the other way, this was an outstanding job by Quartey						
6/18/05	**Antonio Tarver W 12 Glen Johnson**	**HBO**	**world lh**	**A**	**A-**	**C+**
Try to name an active fighter who's better in rematches than Tarver is; we can't either						
6/21/05	Damien Fuller D 10 John Brown	ESPN2	l	C+	B+	D+
Raise your hand if you saw this and said to yourself, "Brown is still fighting?"						
6/24/05	Daniel Ponce De Leon KO 7 Phillip Payne	Telefutura	jf	C	D+	B-
Keep putting guys in front of De Leon who can't move and he'll keep taking them out; and we'll keep watching						
6/24/05	Troy Lowry Tech. Dec. 6 Santiago Samaniego	PPV	sm	C	B+	C-
Tell us again why there's no instant replay in boxing; this was the perfect scenario for it						
6/24/05	Matt Vanda W 12 Yory Boy Campas	PPV	jm	C	B	B-
Yory Boy, that ringing in your ears is retirement calling						
6/24/05	Oleg Maskaev KO 3 Livin Castillo	ESPN2	h	C+	D-	D+
Maskaev? A title shot? What, Lou Savarese is busy?						
6/25/05	Carlos Maussa KO 7 Vivian Harris	PPV	jw	A	C+	B
Maussa the only guy we can think of whose face looks better after a hard fight						
6/25/05	Floyd Mayweather KO 6 Arturo Gatti	PPV	jw	A	C-	C+
Mayweather should be fighting wolverines or alligators; he's too good for other humans						
7/1/05	Armado Velardez KO 1 Floyd Trumpet	Telefutura	jm	C	B	D-
Hey, ref, how about giving a guy a chance to recover? What's the hurry?						
7/1/05	Jorge Solis KO 5 Nicky Bentz	Telefutura	f	C+	B-	C+
Solis impressive; Bentz has been around, but was never in this						
7/1/05	Robert Wiggins KO 5 Courage Tshabalala	ESPN2	h	C-	B	C+
Okay, try to name a fighter today whose got a more ironic first name than Tshabalala does						
7/1/05	George Khalid Jones Tech. Dec. 9 Freddie Moore	ESPN2	lh	C+	B+	C
Isn't there any kind of questionnaire judges have to complete that asks if they've had lobotomies?						
7/2/05	Sam Peter KO 2 Tauras Sykes	Showtime	h	B-	C+	C+
Isn't it fun when guys like Sykes, who looks like a bouncer at a strip joint, get flattened?						
7/5/05	Rasheem Brown KO 2 Chris Troupe	ESPN2	m	C+	B-	C+
We don't know how far Brown will go, but he's got some pop in that right hand						
7/5/05	Ian Gardner W 10 Mohamed Said	ESPN2	m	C+	B+	D
Opponents should be allowed to hit Gardner in the back, or with a bag of rocks or a large stick						

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(RING championship fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

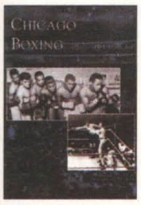
Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox Sports Net; Uni—Univision; Telef—Telefutura; Telem—Telemundo; HBO L—HBO Latino

THE BOXING BOOKSHELF

One constantly hears stories about boxing's "good old days," when there seemed to be multiple club shows every week in most major cities. Curiosity is sparked among fight fans, as they wonder how that era must have looked and what it would have been like to go back in time to those thrilling days of yesteryear.

Thanks to Arcadia Publishing, fans can do just that, through a series of primarily pictorial histories on boxing, each devoted to a separate city. Arcadia has produced books on the boxing histories of Baltimore, Boston, Cleveland, Detroit, Philadelphia, and San Francisco. The latest addition to this series is *Chicago Boxing* ($19.99, 128 pages, paperback), compiled by J.J. Johnston and Sean Curtin, with a foreword by David Mamet.

The reader should be forewarned: *Chicago Boxing* is not a Pulitzer Prize-winner stylistically (typos are not uncommon). Nor is it meant to be. The authors have gathered photos chronicling the Second City's boxing scene from all possible sources (just as the other authors did in this ever-growing series), so one could more accurately describe the book as a labor of love than a literary masterpiece. For boxing fans, that's enough.



Gathered from photo collections of fans, fighters, promoters, trainers, and others, *Chicago Boxing* gives us an interesting glimpse of a long-gone era in Chicago history, when, just as in other cities, the Sweet Science was much more popular than it is now. The relative dearth of photos after 1970 also shows how far boxing dropped off the radar in the "Windy City," though the club scene seems to be enjoying a slow and steady semi-renaissance.

One wishes there had been a greater variety of images, such as the arena photos (inside and out) and fight action pictures that can be found in *Metro Detroit Boxing*, for example. But considering each book is a compilation of people's attic-stored albums, we should be thankful for whatever was included. Even with its minor faults, *Chicago Boxing* a worthwhile purchase for any fight fan. It is available at most major bookstores, or through Arcadia Publishing at 1-888-313-2665 or sales@arcadiapublishing.com.

—Mike Greenhill

***

American boxing fans may not be familiar with Scottish light heavyweight Bert Gilroy, but from 1933 to 1950 he was one of Scotland's most popular fighters. Injuries and British boxing politics prevented him from reaching the big time, but Gilroy is remembered as the best of the fighting Gilroy brothers of Coatbridge, the man the British champions avoided.

The story told in *Gilroy Was Here* (Jim Glen Publications, 236 pages, paperback, $24.95) is not uncommon. Managers kept their fighters away from Gilroy, and by the time he met such marquee names as Freddie Mills, Marcel Cerdan, and Don Cockell, he was past his prime, leaving his admirers to wonder how he would have done at his peak. But what makes his story unusual is the idea that Gilroy was avoided because he was Italian. Gilroy, whose real name was Antonio Rea, had the bad luck of being Italian during World War II when anti-Italian sentiment was high in the U.K. His supporters insist he was blackballed because of his ancestry, but the authors suggest British boxing in the post-war years was focused on creating local stars rather than assuring title shots for every fighter who might have deserved one.

The book also details Gilroy's later years as he toured the countryside in "booth fights," a Scottish hybrid of tough-man contests and pro wrestling. He even worked as a bouncer in Scottish gambling dens. It was a hard-knock life, but Gilroy was a hard man.

Gilroy Was Here is co-authored by Gilroy's grandson, Jim Glen, and veteran sportswriter Ian Macfarlane. It's available through www.bertgilroy.com. At times repetitious, the book would have benefited from a good editor. Still, one has to appreciate such a labor of love.

—Don Stradley

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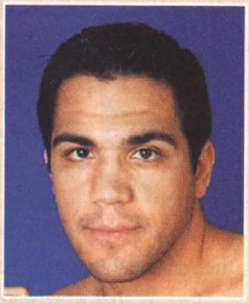
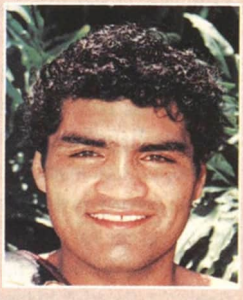
OUTSIDE THE ROPES

With so much negative news to report this issue, let's get things rolling on a positive note: In July, the American Association of Professional Ringside Physicians announced the recipients of the 2005 AAPRP Awards. **Dr. Michael Schwartz** was named Ringside Physician of the Year, while New Jersey boxing commissioner **Larry Hazzard** was honored as Administrator of the Year. **Dr. Joseph Estwanik** was selected as the Distinguished Educator of the Year and Everlast's **George Horowitz** received the Lifetime Achievement Award. The reality TV show *The Contender* was honored for its Outstanding Contribution to boxing. The awards will be presented on September 23, 2005, at the AAPRP's Annual Medical Seminar at the Tropicana Report in Atlantic City, New Jersey ... The grave dangers of boxing were accentuated on several fronts recently, but none more so than in Las Vegas, where junior lightweight **Martin Sanchez Jr.** died on July 2, one day after suffering a head injury in a bout with **Rustam Nugaev** at The Orleans. According to the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Sanchez, 26, was competitive the first half of the bout, but was falling behind when Nugaev, 14-4 (6), knocked him down with a right to the head in the ninth round. Sanchez fell underneath the ropes in his own corner, where a reporter prevented him from falling off the ring apron. Sanchez rolled back under the bottom rope and took the 10-count from referee **Kenny Bayless** at the 2:09 mark. Sanchez, 13-9 (10), was examined in his corner by **Dr. William Berliner**, and as he left the ring under his own power, he waved and blew a kiss to the applauding crowd. He was examined again in his dressing room by **Dr. Jeffery Davidson**, who, like Dr. Berliner, was satisfied that Sanchez was fine. Several minutes later, commission inspector Chuck Anzolone noticed that Sanchez was walking strangely and summoned Dr. Davidson. By then Sanchez' pupils were greatly enlarged, and he was rushed to Valley Hospital where he underwent brain surgery. Sanchez, a firefighter from Mexico City, left behind a wife and an eight-year-old son. Those wishing to make a donation to the Martin Sanchez Family Fund (account number 004970354701) can do so at any Bank of America ... Meanwhile, in Cannyonville, Oregon, **Linda Shampang**, a 50-year-old boxer who suffered brain damage in her professional debut, came out of a coma and is now able to recognize family members. Shampang, a grandmother, suffered a large subdural hematoma during a June 16 bout with Portland's **Jenny House**, 36, and collapsed a few hours after being stopped in the third round. "She's made rapid progress for someone in her condition." Said **Dr. Glenn Keiper**, the neurosurgeon who operated on Shampang ... The Department of Public Safety in Austin, Texas, is under scrutiny following the death of police trainee **Jimmy Ray Carty**, who died of head injuries following a May 26 boxing drill. According to *The Dallas Morning News*, at least three other recruits have been seriously injured in similar boxing drills ... The recent spate of boxing-related head injuries gave added weight to the Nevada State Athletic Commission's decision to uphold heavyweight **Joe Mesi**'s medical suspension. Mesi has not fought since March 12, 2004, when he suffered a brain bleed in a bout with **Vassiliy Jirov**. The NSAC's Medical Advisory Board voted unanimously in April to maintain Mesi's suspension, and the commission followed suit at it June 9 hearing. The 31-year-old Mesi, who presented evidence at the hearing from five doctors who said he is fit to box, has filed suit against the NSAC in an attempt to regain his boxing license ... Former WBA middleweight titleholder **Jorge Castro**, 37, is struggling to regain his health following a serious accident on June 17 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Castro suffered multiple traumas to the head, thorax, abdomen, pelvis, and legs when his car hit a tree. As of late-June, the fighter was in an induced coma and also fighting a severe lung infection. In his last bout prior to the accident, Castro, 129-10-3 (89), stopped **Derrick Harmon** in the seventh round of a light heavyweight match held on May 26 in Buenos Aires ... Former WBA flyweight titlist **Eric Morel** has been suspended by the Nevada commission after entering a "no contest" plea to second-degree sexual assault of a minor in Fitchburg, Wisconsin, in December '02 ... **Bob Yalen**, who formerly oversaw boxing programming on ESPN and ABC, was arrested in May and charged with breach of peace and second-degree threatening, according to the West Hartford (Connecticut) police. Yalen is accused of grabbing a 13-year-old boy by the neck and threatening to kill him. The incident allegedly occurred when the boy laughed at Yalen after the Mohegan Sun's 47-year-old director of sports and entertainment tripped on basketball and fell ... **Patrick "Skeleton" Mboma**, 44, died in late-June a week after apparently ripping his stomach open with a knife at his home in Guguletu, South Africa. Mboma, 22-6 (4), turned pro on April 14, 1980, won the South African super bantamweight title in 1983 and had his final bout on August 28, 1989.

Hazzard: Honored by AAPRP



Mesi: Sues NSAC



Castro: Fighting for life following accident

THE PUNCHLINES

"This just eats away at you. When I heard about this, I was dying inside myself."

—Marc Ratner, executive director of the Nevada State Athletic Commission, on learning of the death of boxer Martin Sanchez Jr.

"I'm no longer willing to fight windmills. I no longer believe you can change this sport. All you can do is function within the parameters of it the best way you can."

—Lou DiBella, disillusioned that he's been able to bend the sport to his will since leaving HBO to become a promoter

The RING
"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

RATINGS ANALYSIS

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER** Junior Welterweight
2. **WINKY WRIGHT** Junior Middleweight
3. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA** Junior Lightweight
4. **ERIK MORALES** Junior Lightweight
5. **MANNY PACQUIAO** Featherweight
6. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** Featherweight
7. **RICKY HATTON** Junior Welterweight
8. **DIEGO CORRALES** Lightweight
9. **JERMAIN TAYLOR** Middleweight
10. **BERNARD HOPKINS** Middleweight

(For period ended July 18, 2005)

HEAVYWEIGHTS: No changes.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: No changes.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Antonio Tarver (number one last issue) regains the world light heavyweight championship thanks to his decision victory over Glen Johnson, who slides down to number one.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Jermain Taylor (fifth last issue) is the new champion following his decision over Bernard Hopkins, who is now the number-one contender. Winky Wright (first last issue) and Felix Sturm (second last issue) slip one position each due to the change at the top. Arthur Abraham (ninth last issue) jumps to the fourth spot on the strength of his win over Howard Eastman, who falls from third to fifth. Maselino Masoe (seventh last issue) exits because he has not fought in more than a year. Oscar De La Hoya (fourth last issue) and Kingsley Ikeke (sixth last issue) drop to sixth and seventh, respectively, due to the realignment, which also allows Fernando Vargas to advance from 10th to ninth. Chad Dawson debuts at number 10.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Major changes as Roman Karmazin crashes the ratings at number one due to his upset victory over Kassim Ouma, who falls from first to second. Ike Quartey enters the ratings at number four, powered by his close 10-round decision over Verno Phillips, who slips from second to fifth. The reshuffling drops Travis Simms from fourth to sixth, Javier Castillejo from fifth to seventh, Rodney Jones from sixth to eighth, Kofi Jantuah from seventh to ninth, and Alejandro Garcia from eighth to 10th. Sergei Dzindziruk (ninth last issue) and to Sergio Martinez (10th last issue) both exit to make room for Karmazin and Quartey's entrance.

WELTERWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Floyd Mayweather leaps from number three to number one due to his one-sided, sixth-round kayo of Arturo Gatti, who plummets from first to sixth. Miguel Cotto moves up from fifth to second. Carlos Maussa enters at number three, after his seventh-round stoppage of Vivian Harris, who falls from second to seventh. The reorganization elevates Junior Witter from seventh to fifth, and Sharmba Mitchell (sixth last issue) exits as he is now campaigning as a welterweight.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Ricky Quiles replaces Javier Jauregui at number eight, based on his 12-round unanimous decision victory over Jauregui, who exits.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: No changes.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: Wayne McCullough (seventh last issue) exits following his TKO loss to Oscar Larios. Jose Luis Valbuena (ninth last issue) departs after two consecutive losses. These two exits bump up Sergio Manuel Medina from 10th eighth and allow Gabula Vabaza and Shoji Kimura to debut at ninth and 10th, respectively.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Toshiaki Nishioka (seventh last issue) departs as he now fighting as a junior featherweight, while Wladimir Sidorenko takes over at 10, bumping up Cruz Carvajal from eighth to seventh, Ricardo Vargas from ninth to eighth, and Jhonny Gonzalez from 10th to ninth.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: Masamori Tokuyama (seventh last issue) zooms to number two following his win over Katsushige Kawashima, who plummets from second to sixth. This shift also forces down Jose Navarro from sixth to seventh.

FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

STRAWWEIGHTS: No changes.

POUND-FOR-POUND: Floyd Mayweather takes over the number-one position following his TKO of Arturo Gatti and Bernard Hopkins' loss to Jermain Taylor. This boosts up Winky Wright (third last issue), Marco Antonio Barrera (fourth last issue), Erik Morales (fifth last issue), Manny Pacquiao (sixth last issue), Ricky Hatton (eighth last issue), and Diego Corrales (ninth last issue) one slot each. Hopkins (first last issue) tumbles to 10th, while Taylor is aboard at nine. ■

THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended July 18, 2005

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS/HBO

Ike Quartey celebrates his return to the ratings after edging Verno Phillips

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between THE RING'S number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

Ratings By The Editors

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

Champ: VITALI KLITSCHKO
Ukraine 35-2 (34)

1. **CHRIS BYRD** Flint, MI 38-2-1 (20)
2. **JOHN RUIZ** Methuen, MA 41-5-1 (28)
3. **HASIM RAHMAN** Baltimore, MD 40-5-1 (33)
4. **JAMES TONEY** Ann Arbor, MI 68-4-2 (43)
5. **MONTE BARRETT** Queens, NY 31-3 (17)
6. **LAMON BREWSTER** Los Angeles, CA 32-2 (28)
7. **CALVIN BROCK** Charlotte, NC 26-0 (21)
8. **SAMUEL PETER** Las Vegas, NV 24-0 (21)
9. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO** Ukraine 44-3 (40)
10. **JAMEEL McCLINE** Clifton, NJ 31-5-3 (19)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: WINKY WRIGHT
St. Petersburg, FL 49-3 (25)

1. **ROMAN KARMAZIN** Russia 34-1-1 (21)
2. **KASSIM OUMA** W. Palm Beach, FL 21-2-1 (13)
3. **DANIEL SANTOS** Puerto Rico 29-2-1 (20)
4. **IKE QUARTEY** Ghana 36-2-1 (30)
5. **VERNO PHILLIPS** Aurora, CO 38-10-1 (20)
6. **TRAVIS SIMMS** Norwalk, CT 24-0 (18)
7. **JAVIER CASTILLEJO** Spain 58-5 (40)
8. **RODNEY JONES** Lafayette, LA 36-3 (22)
9. **KOFI JANTUAH** Las Vegas, NV 28-2 (18)
10. **ALEJANDRO GARCIA** Mexico 24-1 (24)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** Mexico 44-2-1 (33)
2. **INJIN CHI** South Korea 30-2-1 (18)
3. **ROCKY JUAREZ** Houston, TX 23-0 (16)
4. **SCOTT HARRISON** Scotland 24-2-2 (14)
5. **VICTOR POLO** Colombia 34-5-3 (24)
6. **MANUEL MEDINA** Mexico 63-14 (29)
7. **CHRIS JOHN** Indonesia 35-0-1 (19)
8. **SPEND ABAZI** Denmark 32-1 (10)
9. **NICKY COOK** England 25-0 (15)
10. **HIROYUKI ENOKI** Japan 22-0-1 (17)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **OSCAR LARIOS** Mexico 56-3-1 (36)
2. **MAHYAR MONSHIPOUR** France 28-2-2 (19)
3. **ISRAEL VAZQUEZ** Mexico 38-3 (28)
4. **JOAN GUZMAN** Dominican Republic 23-0 (17)
5. **RICARDO CORDOBA** Panama 25-0 (17)
6. **CELESTINO CABALLERO** Panama 22-2 (16)
7. **YODDAMRONG SITHYODTHONG** Thailand 42-2-1 (18)
8. **SERGIO MANUEL MEDINA** Argentina 22-0 (13)
9. **GABULA VABAZA** South Africa 21-0-1 (5)
10. **SHOJI KIMURA** Japan 18-0-1 (7)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ** Mexico 34-3 (30)
2. **HOZUMI HASEGAWA** Japan 18-2 (5)
3. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM** Thailand 48-2-2 (34)
4. **RATANACHAI VORAPIN** Thailand 63-8 (42)
5. **SILENCE MABUZA** South Africa 18-0 (15)
6. **GENARO GARCIA** Mexico 34-4 (20)
7. **CRUZ CARVAJAL** Mexico 25-13-1 (21)
8. **RICARDO VARGAS** Mexico 38-11-3 (12)
9. **JHONNY GONZALEZ** Mexico 29-4 (25)
10. **WLADIMIR SIDORENKO** Ukraine 17-0 (6)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: JEAN-MARC MORMECK
France 31-2 (21)

1. **WAYNE BRAITHWAITE**
Guyana 21-1 (17)
2. **JOHNNY NELSON**
England 44-12-2 (29)
3. **CARL THOMPSON**
England 33-6 (25)
4. **STEVE CUNNINGHAM**
Philadelphia, PA 17-0 (9)
5. **GUILLERMO JONES**
Panama 32-3-2 (25)
6. **O'NEIL BELL**
Atlanta, GA 24-1-1 (22)
7. **DALE BROWN**
Canada 33-4-1 (21)
8. **PIETRO AURINO**
Italy 33-2 (16)
9. **ALEXANDER GUROV**
Ukrain 38-4-1 (33)
10. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK**
Poland 32-1 (25)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: ANTONIO TARVER
Orlando, FL 23-3 (18)

1. **GLEN JOHNSON**
Miami, FL 42-10-2 (28)
2. **ZSOLT ERDEI**
Hungary 22-0 (13)
3. **ROY JONES**
Pensacola, FL 49-3 (38)
4. **JULIO GONZALEZ**
Huntington Beach, CA 38-2 (23)
5. **FABRICE TIOZZO**
France 47-2 (31)
6. **CLINTON WOODS**
England 37-3-1 (23)
7. **TOMASZ ADAMEK**
Poland 29-0 (20)
8. **PAUL BRIGGS**
Australia 23-2 (17)
9. **THOMAS ULRICH**
Germany 28-1 (19)
10. **MONTELL GRIFFIN**
Chicago, IL 47-6 (30)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JOE CALZAGHE**
Wales 39-0 (31)
2. **MIKKEL KESSLER**
Denmark 36-0 (27)
3. **MARKUS BEYER**
Germany 32-2 (12)
4. **JEFF LACY**
St. Petersburg, FL 19-0 (15)
5. **ANTHONY MUNDINE**
Australia 23-3 (18)
6. **DANNY GREEN**
Australia 20-2 (19)
7. **ROBIN REID**
England 38-4-1 (27)
8. **MANNY SIACA**
Puerto Rico 18-5 (16)
9. **OTIS GRANT**
Canada 37-2-1 (17)
10. **LIBRADO ANDRADE**
Mexico 22-0 (16)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: JERMAIN TAYLOR
Little Rock, AR 24-0 (17)

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
Philadelphia, PA 46-3-1 (32)
2. **WINKY WRIGHT**
St. Petersburg, FL 49-3 (25)
3. **FELIX STURM**
Germany 24-1 (11)
4. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM**
Germany 16-0 (14)
5. **HOWARD EASTMAN**
England 40-3 (35)
6. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
Los Angeles, CA 37-4 (29)
7. **KINGSLEY IKEKE**
Canada 23-1 (13)
8. **SAM SOLIMAN**
Australia 30-7 (12)
9. **FERNANDO VARGAS**
Oxnard, CA 25-2 (22)
10. **CHAD DAWSON**
New Haven, CT 18-0 (12)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: ZAB JUDAH
Brooklyn, NY 34-2 (25)

1. **ANTONIO MARGARITO**
Mexico 32-4 (23)
2. **CORY SPINKS**
St. Louis, MO 34-3 (11)
3. **SHANE MOSLEY**
Pomona, CA 40-4 (35)
4. **THOMAS DAMGAARD**
Denmark 36-0 (27)
5. **LUIS COLLAZO**
Queens, NY 25-1 (11)
6. **KERMIT CINTRON**
Reading, PA 24-1 (22)
7. **JOSE ANTONIO RIVERA**
Worcester, MA 37-4-1(24)
8. **OKTAY URKAL**
Germany 35-3 (11)
9. **DAVID ESTRADA**
Chicago, IL 18-2 (9)
10. **SEBASTIAN LUJAN**
Argentina 22-2-1 (14)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: RICKY HATTON
England 39-0 (29)

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
Grand Rapids, MI 34-0 (23)
2. **MIGUEL COTTO**
Puerto Rico 24-0 (20)
3. **CARLOS MAUSSA**
Colombia 18-2 (16)
4. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
Australia 31-2 (25)
5. **JUNIOR WITTER**
England 32-1-2 (19)
6. **ARTURO GATTI**
Jersey City, NJ 39-7 (30)
7. **VIVIAN HARRIS**
Brooklyn, NY 25-2-1 (17)
8. **DeMARCUS CORLEY**
Washington, D.C. 29-4-1 (16)
9. **LOVEMORE NDOU**
Australia 40-8-1 (26)
10. **SOULEYMANE M'BAYE**
France 32-1 (17)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: DIEGO CORRALES
Las Vegas, NV 40-2 (33)

1. **JOSE LUIS CASTILLO**
Mexico 52-7-1 (46)
2. **JOEL CASAMAYOR**
Miami, FL 31-3-1 (19)
3. **JUAN LAZCANO**
El Paso, TX 33-3-1 (25)
4. **JUAN DIAZ**
Houston, TX 28-0 (14)
5. **JULIO DIAZ**
Coachella, CA 31-3 (23)
6. **ACELINO FREITAS**
Brazil 36-1 (31)
7. **ALMAZBEK RAIYMKULOV**
Kyrgyzstan 20-0-1 (12)
8. **RICKY QUILES**
Puerto Rico 38-6-3 (8)
9. **JULIEN LORCY**
France 56-4-2 (41)
10. **JOSE SANTA CRUZ**
Mexico 20-0 (11)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
Mexico 60-4 (42)
2. **ERIK MORALES**
Mexico 48-2 (34)
3. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
Philippines 39-3-2 (30)
4. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
Mexico 41-3 (28)
5. **VICENTE MOSQUERA**
Panama 21-1-1 (10)
6. **YODSANAN NANTHACHAI**
Thailand 44-3-1 (25)
7. **JORGE BARRIOS**
Argentina 43-2-1 (31)
8. **CARLOS HERNANDEZ**
Bellflower, CA 41-5-1 (24)
9. **CASSIUS BALOYI**
South Africa 31-1 (16)
10. **ROBBIE PEDEN**
Australia 25-2 (14)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MARTIN CASTILLO**
Mexico 29-1 (16)
2. **MASAMORI TOKUYAMA**
North Korea 31-3-1 (8)
3. **LUIS PEREZ**
Nicaragua 23-1 (15)
4. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
Mexico 31-1-1 (24)
5. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
Venezuela 27-1 (25)
6. **KATSUSHIGE KAWASHIMA**
Japan 28-4 (18)
7. **JOSE NAVARRO**
Los Angeles, CA 22-1 (9)
8. **IVAN HERNANDEZ**
Mexico 21-1-1 (13)
9. **MARK JOHNSON**
Washington, D.C. 44-4 (28)
10. **ERIC MOREL**
Madison, WI 35-2 (18)

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
Thailand 56-2 (31)
2. **LORENZO PARRA**
Venezuela 25-0 (17)
3. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
Australia 23-0 (18)
4. **IRENE PACHECO**
Colombia 29-1 (22)
5. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
Argentina 19-0-2 (13)
6. **JORGE ARCE**
Mexico 39-3-1 (29)
7. **ROSENDO ALVAREZ**
Nicaragua 34-2-2 (22)
8. **BRAHIM ASLOUM**
France 19-0 (7)
9. **TAKEFUMI SAKATA**
Japan 23-2-1 (10)
10. **HUSSEIN HUSSEIN**
Australia 28-2 (21)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ROBERTO VASQUEZ**
Panama 19-1 (16)
2. **WILL GRIGSBY**
St. Paul, MN 18-2-1 (11)
3. **VICTOR BURGOS**
Mexico 37-14-3 (22)
4. **HUGO CAZARES**
Mexico 20-3-1 (14)
5. **PICHITNOI SIRIWAT**
Thailand 34-2 (15)
6. **NELSON DIEPPA**
Puerto Rico 22-2-2 (13)
7. **ERIC ORTIZ**
Mexico 24-4-1 (16)
8. **ULISES SOLIS**
Mexico 17-1 (13)
9. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
Mexico 33-3-1 (20)
10. **KERMIN GUARDIA**
Colombia 35-4 (21)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **YUTAKA NIDA**
Japan 18-1-3 (8)
2. **MUHAMMAD RACHMAN**
Indonesia 50-7-4 (22)
3. **IVAN CALDERON**
Puerto Rico 23-0 (5)
4. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
Japan 15-1 (7)
5. **ISAAC BUSTOS**
Mexico 24-7-3 (13)
6. **EAGLE KYOWA**
Japan 13-1 (5)
7. **JUAN LANDAETA**
Venezuela 18-3-1 (15)
8. **OMAR SOTO**
Mexico 14-2-1 (10)
9. **DANIEL REYES**
Colombia 34-3-1 (29)
10. **RODEL MAYOL**
Philippines 21-0 (16)

RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

EXCUSES, EXCUSES

Wasn't cable-television supposed to be the healthy alternative to all of the air pollution being churned out by the commercial networks? Well, what the heck happened? Pick up the remote, start clicking away any time of the day or night, and you're guaranteed to have the worse surfing experience this side of a beach bum who got wiped out by the Bonzai Pipeline. Cable has more channels these days than Lindsay Lohan has freckles and, consequently, more junk on the menu than the snack bar at a tractor pull.

And one of the truly worst affronts to my sense of taste, as least as far as sports programming is concerned, has to be *The Top Five Reasons You Can't Blame …*, an ESPN Classic offering that's so out of touch with reality that your columnist thought it was a late April Fools Day joke the first time he watched it.

Here's the premise: The show takes a controversial figure from the world of sports, lists five reasons you can't blame him for the actions that have earned him the ire of the masses, then makes lame excuses to let him off the hook. (Why you can't blame John McEnroe for his outbursts, the 1919 Chicago White Sox for throwing the World Series, Kobe Bryant for breaking up the Lakers, Art Modell for moving the Cleveland Browns to Baltimore, etc.) The arguments in favor of these guys are so shallow and such a stretch that, ironically, they end up convincing you that the subject of the show is even *more* to blame than he was when the program started.

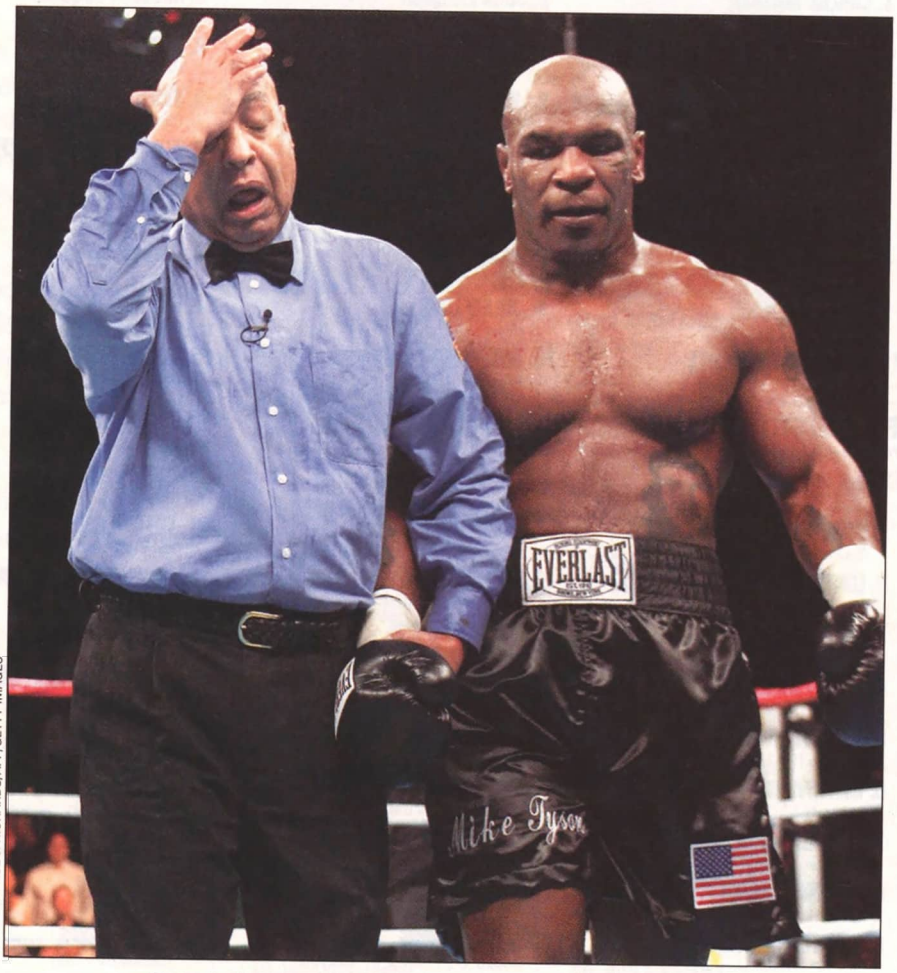


PHOTO BY PAUL J. RICHARDS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Cortez had some nerve docking Mike two points for butting McBride

Maybe these half-hour doses of silliness are just a reflection of this age of political correctness, when the idea of holding anyone accountable for their actions is considered picking on them. Well, if that's the case, then far be it from me to ever again point fingers at anybody in the boxing game. It's time to start giving everybody the benefit of the doubt and looking at things from their standpoint.

With that in mind, here are the top five reasons you can't blame …

•Mike Tyson for quitting against Kevin McBride:

1) After wrenching his rival's arm and headbutting open a cut, "Kid Dynamite" figured it was a perfect time to go out true to form.

2) Tyson wanted to give new meaning to the term "stool pigeon."

3) Judging by his behavior over the past few years, it finally became apparent that he drove his own nosebone into his brain during a shadowboxing accident in 1999.

4) He wanted to impress his future employer, Vince McMahon, by showing that he could get knocked out without getting hit for real.

5) He wanted to get an early start on his missionary work. ("Leg Iron Mike" was under the impression it had something to do with the missionary position.)

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Can you blame Rijker for not wanting any part of Laila?

•Evander Holyfield for competing on *Dancing With The Stars*:

1) "The Real Deal" was adamant about proving that his legs weren't nearly as shot as we all thought.

2) He wanted his most famous prolonged television embrace to be with someone prettier than John Ruiz.

3) He's convinced he can still be the heavyweight champion of the world—of stupid reality shows.

4) Told he'd be great at cutting a rug, he figured it was either do this or take a pair of scissors to Gil Clancy's toupee.

5) He figured boxing fans hadn't been treated to ballroom dancing in years—or at least since Hector Camacho stopped fighting in Atlantic City hotel nightclubs.

•Puerto Rican fans for not selling out Madison Square Garden for Cotto-Abdullaev:

1) Too many guys wanted to save their hooting and hollering for the muchachas at the Puerto Rican Day parade the following afternoon.

2) Fans who heard that Puerto Rico's most lethal powerhitter was in town assumed it was the Mets' Carlos Beltran, so they headed over to Shea Stadium.

3) Too many fans wanted to save their money for Felix Trinidad's retirement gift.

4) Too many others wanted to save their money for tickets to "Tito's" next big fight—and for the Kleenex they'll need in order to dry their tears.

5) Everyone knows there are always better fights *outside* the Garden.

•Jim Lampley for sporting a new buzzcut:

1) He wanted the round-card girls to mistake him for Matt Lauer.

2) Feeling responsible for single-handedly causing a hole in the ozone layer the size of Antarctica, he felt compelled to quit the hairspray cold turkey.

3) It was time to let Larry Merchant hold the title of Best Coiffed HBO Broadcaster.

4) Lamps got tired of ringsiders yelling "Down in front" to his hair.

5) He discovered on one forgettable night that it wasn't that new brand of styling gel that was giving his mane all that body. It was what a prelim welterweight had blown out of his nose between rounds.

•New York politicos for voting down a new Manhattan stadium:

1) Nobody was going to believe that 3,500 fans in an 80,000-seat stadium whose interior had been cordoned off with drapes was a "sellout crowd."

2) "Live from Madison Square Garden" has a better ring to it than, "Live from the Mr. Clean Chrome Dome" or "Live from StupidComputerCompanyName Stadium."

3) The stadium was planned for the West Side, and nobody could bear to read the newspaper headline, "West Side Story," after every big bout there.

4) AstroTurf would have slowed Floyd Mayweather's footwork.

5) If the retractable roof ever malfunctioned and was stuck open during a fight, Arturo Gatti wouldn't be the only "Thunder" scaring the hell out of people.

•Lucia Rijker for ducking Laila Ali:

1) Rijker realized she'd be giving away more weight than Butterbean would if he ever donated one of his legs to science.

2) She figured she'd have a better chance against a coal miner's daughter than a three-time heavyweight champion's offspring.

3) A native of the Netherlands, Rijker would feel too much pressure if she tried to avenge countryman Rudi Lubbers' loss to Laila's father.

4) Let's face it: There aren't too many good-looking women in women's boxing. Two of the hotter babes shouldn't be trying to rearrange each other's faces.

5) Rijker feared that in the heat of battle, she'd resort to the same tactic she used to finish off Hilary Swank in *Million Dollar Baby*. ■

DIGGING DEEP

By Ivan Goldman

ENDURING IMAGE

Benedict Arnold, still the poster boy of treason after all these years, is remembered almost exclusively for changing sides and going over to the British. His early career as a fighting general of dash and daring is barely known. If Charles Manson or Lee Harvey Oswald performed any commendable deeds, they've also been lost in history.

Now consider Mike Tyson. He might have been remembered as the quick, swarming blast-master who won a heavyweight title at age 20 and terrorized the division for years. But his last run out the gate—if that's what it was—tilted the legacy scale even further into the ugly zone. Most fighters quit the sport too late and bequeath sad ring endings. But Tyson exited as a quitter and cheat who butted Kevin McBride, threw elbows, punched low, and even resorted again to arm-bending and biting. His performance makes it even more likely history will remember him as the man who bit off a chunk of Evander Holyfield's ear and spit it on the canvas.

But before history commemorates Tyson's careening career of cruddy carnival capers, let's recall a sterling act of courage. It was against champion Lennox Lewis in June 2002. Tyson, ragged and shot from years in the can and assorted other miseries, had only one round in him. When he came out for the second, he was already finished. Staying in there anyway was a phenomenally brave act. Most of us, fortunately, can't even imagine what it's like to be slammed around the ring by a huge, finely tuned athlete like Lewis for eight long rounds. It was one of the most brutal beatings ever administered on global TV. Tyson could have died in there. But he didn't quit. Unfortunately, he didn't retire, either, missing a great opportunity.

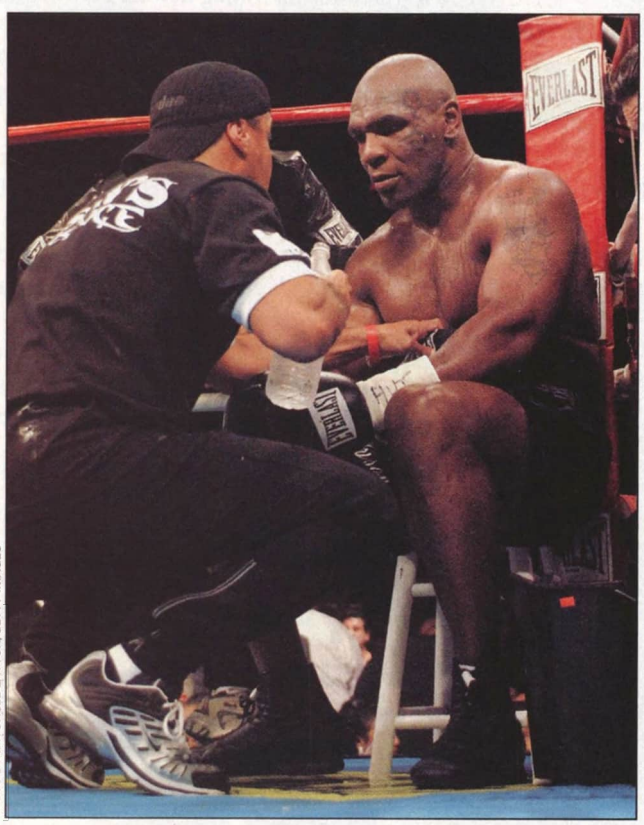


PHOTO BY MITCHELL LAYTON/GETTY IMAGES

Jeff Fenech tries to motivate a unenthusiastic Tyson between rounds of the McBride fiasco

Ever since Tyson's talent and magnetism pulled him out of a Brooklyn ghetto, he's been a modern Shakespearian figure—the recipient of magnificent gifts and truly rotten breaks. He made repeated attempts to understand how to live with sudden wealth and fame. Wracked by insecurities, he did a crummy job. But as a kid, he'd been thrown into the street like an unwanted dog, and it didn't boost his character.

Now skip to 1992. Viewed in the context of those not-guilty findings for O.J. Simpson, Robert Blake, and Michael Jackson, it's difficult to understand how that Indiana jury could have convicted Tyson of rape on such flimsy evidence. But he had no Johnny Cochran in his corner. The chief defense attorney told the jury everyone knew his client was a monster, so he should get a free pass to punish Desiree Washington for her ignorance. Anyone who would swallow that argument probably believes cab drivers carry only $5 in change.

When Tyson left the penitentiary three years later, he'd lost most of those extra attributes that made him special—

superb footwork, head movement, conditioning, and focused fury. And as a man, he was still a mess—a self-destructive, emotionally ill figure who babbled, threatened, and raged right on camera, as though he wanted to prove the defense team correct. *I'm an animal. Stay away.*

But Tyson had picked up something in prison besides additional tattoos—knowledge. He said he'd done plenty of reading in there, and it showed. Even during his nutso tirades, he was now making analogies and referring to concepts that were the product of serious intellectual probing. He also alluded to medication he was taking to control his depression.

On the money side of life's ledger, even after his rape conviction and attack on Holyfield's ears, Tyson made many more millions for himself and others. Purses remained big even though he was only a barely legal freak show on the edge of the sport who, defying logic and reason, still performed in center ring. But he got cheated, burned up his share, and went bankrupt.

So far he's managed to hang on to many of his rich-guy toys. He also supported his six children in reputed comfort. As an economics professor taught me long ago, some enterprises create more of a snowball effect than others. And even a mediocre Tyson—as TV networks, his entourage, casinos, opponents, and ex-wives know—was one heck of an economic snowball. Others who benefited financially were victims he beat up outside the ring and were bought off with settlements of unrevealed but no doubt sizeable sums.

As I write this, the retired Tyson, apparently helped by a psychiatrist, has been behaving himself, at least in public. It's by no means certain he's finished fighting. He could still wind up competing for small change on ESPN2, where his former trainer Teddy Atlas will continue to pinpoint his character defects with such damning accuracy. If he runs out of state commissions, there are always Native American casinos, overseas venues—and circus tents.

If the retirement sticks, I doubt he'll carry out his scheme to do missionary work. But it's worth noting that if he does migrate to foreign lands, he'd be tracing the pattern of an American who previously died overseas and broke—Benedict Arnold.

OLYMPIC FAREWELL: Newly inducted Hall of Fame promoter Don Fraser tipped me off that real estate baron Steve Needleman, who made a run at bringing boxing back to L.A.'s Olympic Auditorium, threw in the towel and sold the place to a Korean Christian church. This follows in the footsteps of the Great Western Forum down the freeway, which a few years ago was purchased by a predominantly African-American church.

No, this doesn't spell the end of boxing in L.A. There are plenty of little shows around, and the Staples Center occasionally snags a big fight. I won't wax nostalgic for the Olympic. I'm unsure why nostalgia gets waxed anyway. Linoleum I can understand.

The Olympic had its heyday back when boxing crowds wore suits and ties. But by the '60s it had degenerated to a place where drunks in the balcony poured beer and sometimes even urine on fans below. This drove out the last fans with IQs above room temperature.

Cinderella Man ***painted an unflattering and totally inaccurate portrait of Max Baer***

Needleman bought the place in the '90s and fixed it up, renaming it the Grand Olympic Auditorium. But several promoters put on cards there and limped away financially bruised. I will miss the place, sort of.

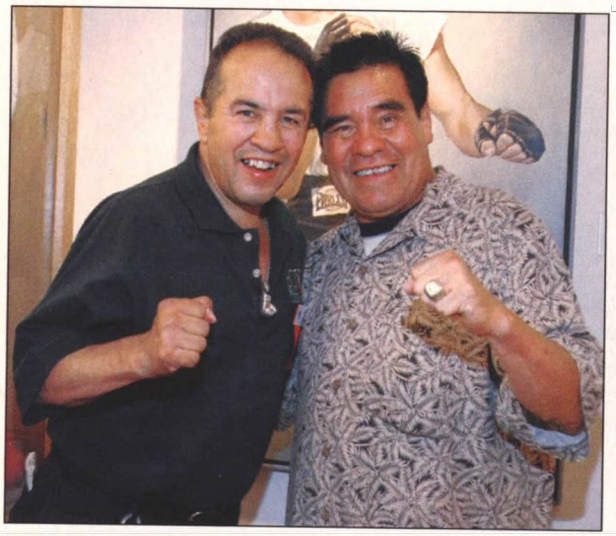
MAGOO: To the makers of *Cinderella Man* for depicting heavyweight champ Max Baer as a brute who rather enjoyed killing men in the ring. Their cynical re-creation of Baer as a comic-book villain destroyed everything praiseworthy in the film. They even inserted a scene in which Baer, played by Craig Bierko, warned Mr. and Mrs. James Braddock (Russell Crowe and Renee Zellweger) that he would likely beat Braddock to death and then romance his widow. Perhaps at the time you felt a little deja vu. If you saw *Rocky III*, that explains it. You were viewing an almost word-for-word repeat of a scene in the 1982 film, with Baer standing in as Mr. T's Clubber Lang. Stealing is bad enough, but lifting material from a *Rocky* sequel is like burglarizing a burned out building

There are people around who still remember Baer. He was a happy-go-lucky fellow who loved a good joke and a good time, and who, unfortunately for his career, trained only sporadically. But he was no more villainous than Elmer Fudd. The film even depicted a New York crowd as 100 percent behind Braddock over Baer, which makes Steven Seagal movies look credible. ■

CAMERA CLICKS

International Boxing Hall of Fame Induction Weekend

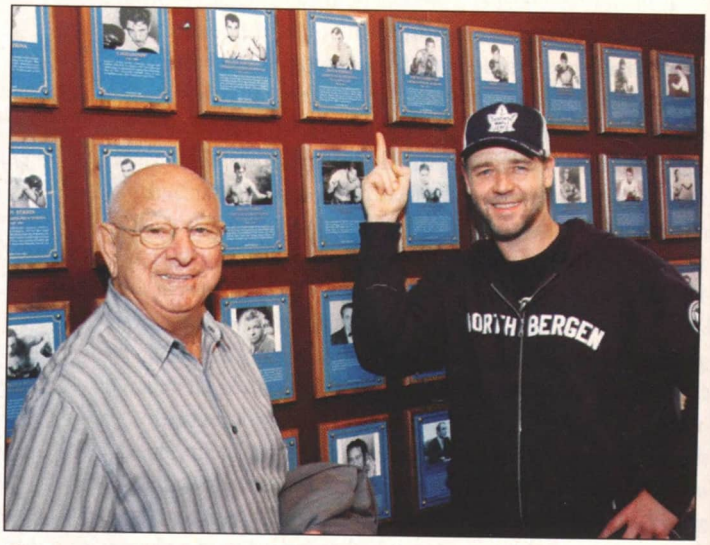
PHOTOS BY PAT ORR



It's been 30 years since Ruben Olivares flattened Bobby Chacon in two rounds to capture the WBC featherweight title, and 32 years since he stopped him in nine rounds for the NABF title, but Chacon looks to have forgiven him—probably because "Schoolboy" got a measure of revenge when he won their third fight by unanimous decision. Chacon was part of the 2005 induction class, and not many people would dispute that the two-division titlist and two-time Fight of the Year winner belongs there with rival Olivares and the other greats.

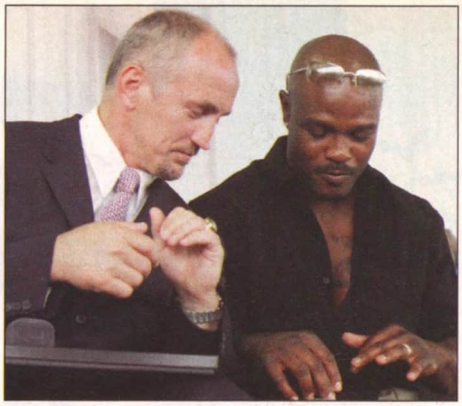
Nobody will ever accuse Bert Sugar of being the Hall of Fame's most dignified honoree, but that doesn't make the former Ring *editor any less deserving. Here, he's flanked by a couple of other recent Non-Participant inductees, promoters J Russell Peltz and Don Chargin.*

Is it any surprise to see Diego Corrales and Basilio bonding? These are two men cut from the same cloth, never-say-die warriors of the highest order. And Lou Duva, still going strong at age 83, is the never-say-die sort as well, although in his case, we mean it a bit more literally.



This is about as close as you're going to get to making it into the Hall, Russell. Crowe points to the plaque honoring Jim Braddock, the Hall of Famer whom Crowe portrayed in Cinderella Man, *while the actor's trainer and co-star, Angelo Dundee, looks on.*

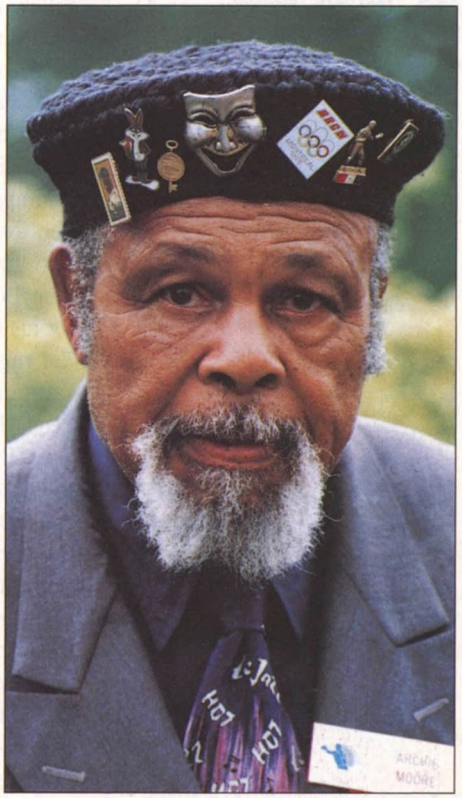
Hall of Fame Induction Weekend isn't all about old-timers schmoozing; there's a place for the young pups as well, such as Juan Diaz, who took part in a public workout. The undefeated "Baby Bull" has a long way to go before he can earn consideration for induction in Canastota, but it can't hurt his cause that he's at least keeping in shape between fights.



Two of the 2005 honorees, McGuigan and Terry Norris, compare their new jewelry. Back in the day, they both wore larger jewelry, as McGuigan owned a featherweight belt from 1985-'86, and Norris held 154-pound titles on three different occasions between 1990 and '97.

NOSTALGIA CORNER

Fighters, trainers, and actors are all welcome at the IBHOF, just as long as there aren't any telephones nearby for any of them to throw at innocent bystanders. Included in this group are Hall of Fame trainer Angelo Dundee, Hall of Fame welterweight and middleweight champ Carmen Basilio, Academy Award winner Russell Crowe, new Hall of Fame inductee Barry McGuigan, and Academy Award winner Daniel Day-Lewis (who was trained by McGuigan for the film The Boxer*). Apparently, Day-Lewis' training is still going on, as McGuigan seems here to be teaching him how to execute a snapmare.*



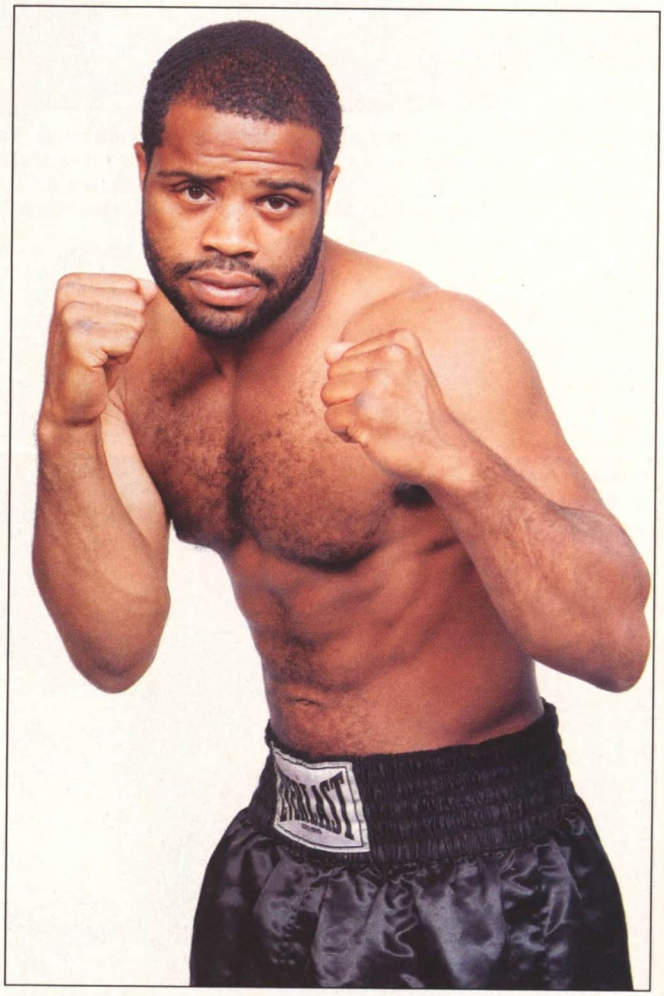
Archie Moore, an IBHOF charter inductee, is pictured at the Hall 1996. The former light heavyweight champion was a fixture at Induction Weekend until his death in 1998. Although there has yet to be a film about his storybook life and career, Moore appeared in a number of movies and television shows.

NEW FACES

DEREK ENNIS JR.

Junior Middleweight

By Frank Krewda



PRO RECORD

2002		
Aug. 20	Huston Crayton, Boston, MA	W 4
2003		
April 17	Jorge Delgado, Philadelphia, PA	KO 4
Oct. 25	Larry Brothers, Philadelphia	KO 3
2004		
April 9	David Gogichaisvili, Philadelphia	W 4
Aug. 6	Vance Garvey, Philadelphia	W 4
Oct. 22	Bruce Corby, Philadelphia	KO 3
2005		
April 15	Joshua Smith, Philadelphia	KO 3

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
7	7	0	0	4

The image of a toddler sporting a pair of mini-Everlast gloves may be unsettling to some in today's politically correct society. But the path Derek "Bozy" Ennis Sr. laid out for his namesake to follow at an early age has paid dividends inside and outside of the ring.

"I had gloves on Derek while he was learning to walk," Bozy recalled.

Imparting an appreciation for the Sweet Science may have been the best thing Bozy could have done for his son. Growing up in the rugged Germantown section of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, wouldn't be easy. But what life lacked in opulence, Derek's parents more than made up for by providing a strong family structure.

In order to combat the threat of crime, drugs, or any other scourge common to the inner-city, the elder Ennis, a former welterweight prospect in the late-1970s and early-'80s, took Derek Jr. to "Bozy's Dungeon," the gym where his father introduced his son to the rudiments of the game at an early age.

Whether he was just happy to be with Dad or believed he had the ability to achieve something with his fists, Derek quickly took to the sweat, grunts, and punches that permeated his father's world. By the age of 16, when Derek had his first sanctioned fight, he had made that world his own as well.

The younger Ennis proved to be a quick study in the ring. So quick, that his amateur career was over after just 19 fights. But his brief campaign as a novice was not without highlights, including a Golden Gloves championship, a victory at the Junior Olympics in Mexico City, and a bitter-

(Continued on page 123)

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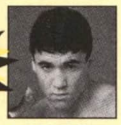

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★ Kid Gavilan
★ Ken Buchanan
★ Alexis Arguello
★ Buddy McGirt
★ Pipino Cuevas
★ Nino Benvenuti
★ "Irish" Micky Ward
★ Carlos Palomino
★ Ricardo "Finito" Lopez
★ Sir Henry Cooper
★ Dwight Qawi
★ Tommy Morrison
★ Angelo Dundee
★ Johnny Tapia
★ Andrew Golota
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★ Benvenuti - Griffith

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"Pretty Boy" FLOYD

Just As Great As He Says He Is ... Maybe Even Better

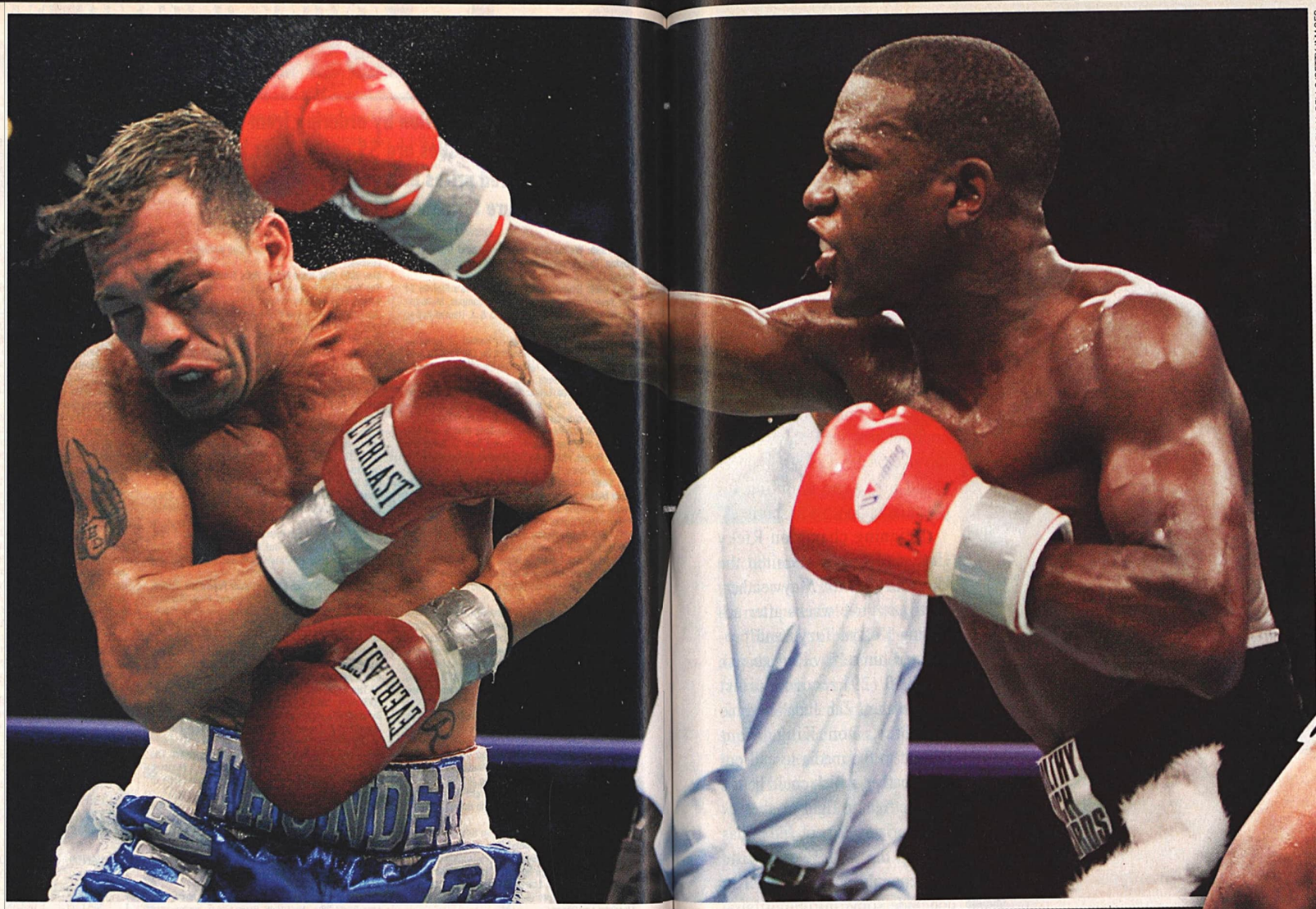
By David Mayo

The baffling thing that makes an all-in wager against Floyd Mayweather such a fool's errand is his innate ability to exploit even the slightest opponent miscue in painfully humiliating fashion. Any habitual tic, jerk, scratch, or flinch that betrays strength or weakness, and Mayweather picks on it like Phil Ivey picks on weekend card players flashing fat bankrolls.

Poker jargon for such self-exposure is a "tell," and on the evening of June 25, Arturo Gatti might as well have screamed his into a megaphone from atop Atlantic City's Boardwalk Hall. Perhaps Gatti can use videotape to quit tipping his pitches before making a run seven pounds north, but on the night he shoved every chip into the pot for his final 140-pound appearance, Gatti's hands betrayed his hand.

While being honest, since this seems the ideal place for it, we're really just talking degrees of defeat here, aren't we? The winning hand always rests beneath Mayweather's Winning gloves anyway. At this peak stage of his Hall of Fame career, it seems the only variable is how much each opponent risks in pursuit of becoming the next Buster Douglas or Frankie Randall.

One or more of three things will spoil Mayweather's nine-year unbeaten streak someday—a fortuitous punch, an over-ambitious weight jump, and/or Father Time—but those circumstances seem distant for now.

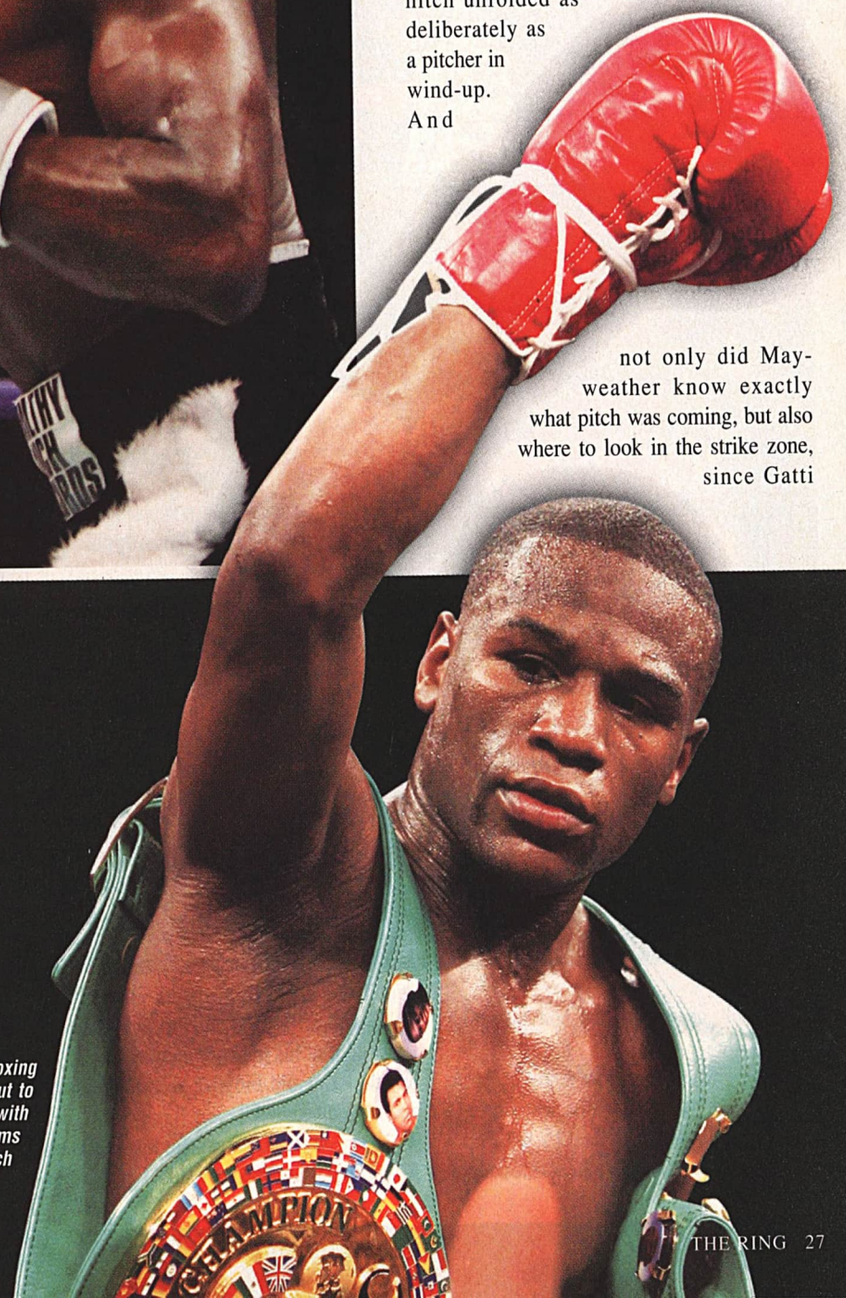


PHOTOS BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Gatti had a puncher's chance but no chance to land a punch. Mayweather closed the gap so quickly that he hooked off the jab barely a half-minute into the fight. The execution over the next six rounds, until trainer Buddy McGirt saved Gatti from additional abuse already being planned in Mayweather's corner, was disturbingly efficient and excruciating for Gatti's home crowd to witness.

Mayweather, who claims never to watch videotape of an opponent, spotted Gatti's tell in that very first round. Gatti keeps his right hand in a tighter defensive position until he plans to use it, when it leaves his face and retreats to his shoulder.

Mayweather seemed to see it frame by frame. For him, Gatti's tiny hitch unfolded as deliberately as a pitcher in wind-up. And not only did Mayweather know exactly what pitch was coming, but also where to look in the strike zone, since Gatti



Mayweather dominated Gatti with masterful boxing and pinpoint punching (top) in what turned out to be a total mismatch. "Pretty Boy" emerged with another alphabet belt, but could have problems finding another opponent to help generate such a large pay-per-view audience.

PHOTOS BY WILL HART/HBO

It didn't matter whether Mayweather used his right (top) or left hand (above), he found Gatti virtually impossible to miss. Part of his success was based on the ability to frequently know what punch Gatti was going to throw before he threw it. It was the most one-sided pay-per-view in recent years.

inexplicably abandoned his bodypunching fight plan.

"I knew when Gatti was going to throw just a regular jab because he just flicks it out there, with his right hand by his chin," Mayweather said. "But if he's throwing a right hand behind the jab, he cocks it back. I saw a lot of his punches coming. So I was just the same old Floyd. I just rolled under and stayed focused."

Like Matt Damon's character in *Rounders*, the 28-year-old Mayweather figures he isn't playing the cards anyway. He's playing the opponent. And if he plays it straight, he can grind into powder every opponent's pursuit of fame and riches at the expense of his 34-0 (23) record.

The operative questions harkened by Mayweather's one-way dismantling of Gatti, and asked aloud by Jim Lampley on HBO Pay-Per-View's telecast, are these: Who can beat Mayweather? And why would anyone even try?

While the best bet may be to fold at any hint of head-to-head confrontation with Mayweather, the size of the pots he produces could prove too tempting for potential opponents to spurn.

Reigning champion Ricky Hatton of England visited the United States for Mayweather-Gatti just three weeks after unseating Kostya Tszyu and proclaimed himself willing to risk his 39-0 (29) record against Mayweather. Zab Judah and his promoter, Don King, went straight to the media to call out Mayweather, which could be the most intriguing fight on the latter's horizon, except Judah has to keep the welterweight title long enough for Mayweather to conclude some intriguing business at 140 first, after which King and Bob Arum would have to do business.

Arum-promoted Miguel Cotto looms in the distance, though it would be no surprise if he and Mayweather never meet. Top Rank has cooled any thought it might have had of using Mayweather to make Cotto's career, a product of continued distinct separations in the fighters' respective skill and experience levels.

Emanuel Steward professed to have the right man to beat Mayweather until that same night of June 25, when Vivian Harris' conditioning exposed him as unworthy of beating nondescript Colombian Carlos Maussa, much less Mayweather. Maussa knocked out Harris in the

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Although Gatti has always been regarded as an effective bodypuncher, it was Mayweather who landed the best blows to the midsection. But by the end of the sixth round, Mayweather's trainer told him to concentrate on the head, as Gatti was already worn out and ready to fold.

seventh round to take a meaningless WBA title, leaving Steward hard-pressed to find the next potential Mayweather conqueror.

"Floyd is probably the closest thing to an unbeatable fighter today," Steward said. "He's in his prime, he's technically superior to any other fighter in the world, he's supremely confident, he has a lifetime in the sport, and boxing is still what he wants to do. Hatton is the fight everyone is going to want to see, but Floyd may just be too skilled for him. Cotto isn't ready. I don't know who can beat him at 140 right now."

Hatton-Mayweather will not be easily negotiated. Hatton generally fights on Showtime, so television talks could get touchy. HBO brass has hinted that the pay-per-view attractiveness could be compromised because Hatton has fought on the smaller subscription network, and because the English audience would be forced to buy the live telecast at 4 a.m.—even if the fight happens there—to satisfy U.S. program scheduling.

Mayweather insisted he will not go to England to challenge Hatton, then admitted the right number of pounds in his bank account could tilt that scale. Hatton said he is willing to go to the U.S. after 19 consecutive fights in his native country, but added that without similar flexibility from Mayweather, options become more limited.

"A lot of people say I want to stay in England, but that's not true," Hatton said. "I want to fight in the U.S. It's a dream of mine to fight in the U.S. But I'm the champion and that has to be taken into consideration. All good champions travel wherever they have to go to get the big fights. Kostya Tszyu traveled to England to fight me. I'm willing to travel to defend my title. But if Floyd isn't willing to travel to England, we'll have to see what happens."

While boxing fans consider Mayweather's dream fights—Hatton, Judah, Cotto, or perhaps even Tszyu or a Diego Corrales rematch—they are far more likely to see him against Antonio Margarito in a proposed November 12 match.

Sanctioning bodies and promotional interests would be at the heart of that fight. Margarito holds the WBO welterweight title, a joke without a punch line, and the WBC super lightweight title Mayweather won from Gatti doesn't mean much more during Hatton's reign. Margarito is promoted by Top Rank, could get a big payday for fighting at a catch weight, and would attract the Hispanic audience. Mayweather is coming off a dominant win purchased in 340,000 U.S. homes for $15.3-million, would get the overwhelming bulk of purses, potentially could fight in Las Vegas for the first time since 2002, and is under subtle pressure from Jose Sulaiman not to fight for the title of another sanctioning body after the WBC president stepped in and threatened purse bids when Mayweather-Gatti talks stalled.

So Mayweather-Margarito could satisfy

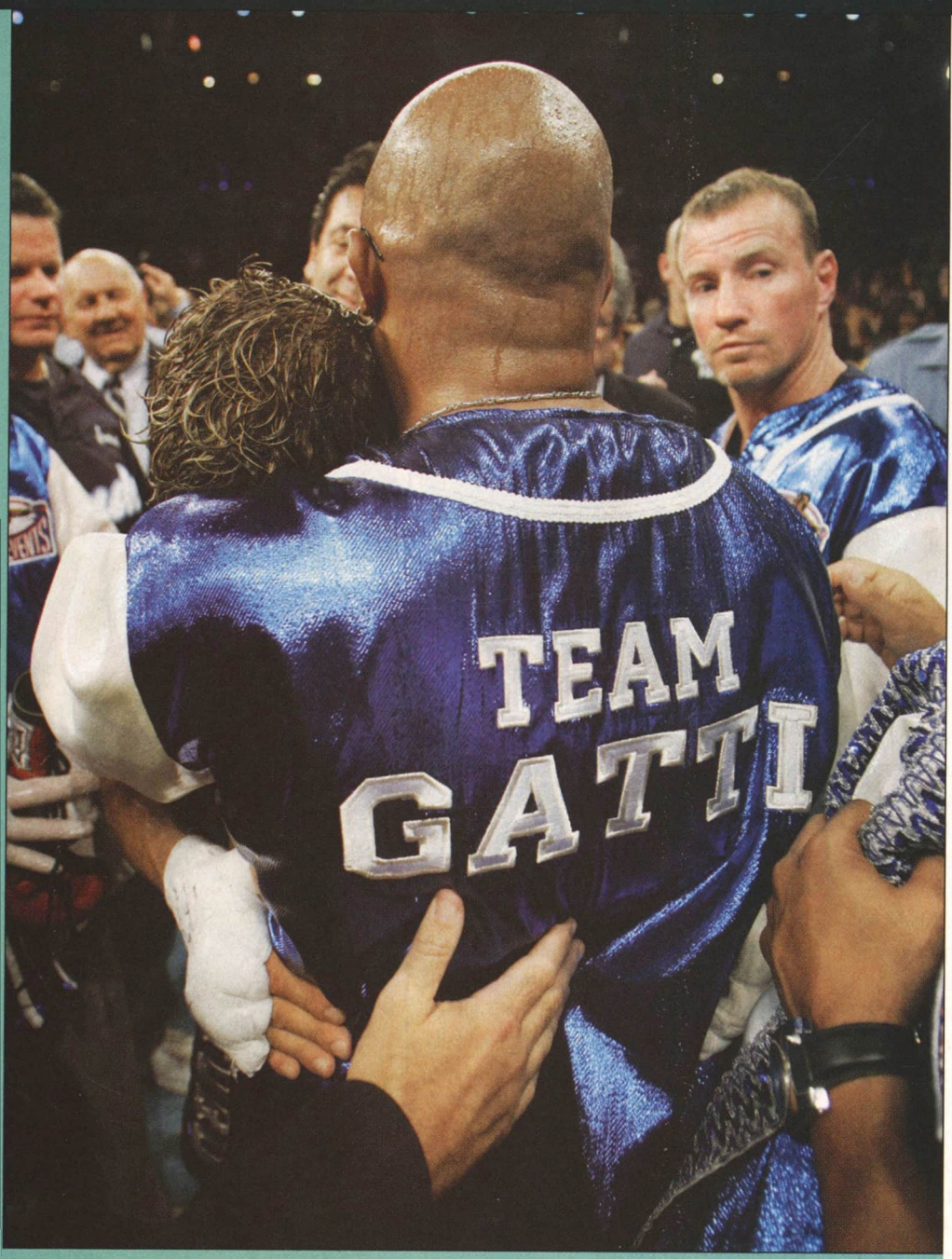


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Trainer Buddy McGirt comforts Gatti shortly after telling referee Earl Morton that his man was through for the night after suffering through six rounds of abuse. Gatti, who offered no protest when McGirt said he was stopping the fight, said he wanted to continue to fight, but as a welterweight.

all those interests, if not the more enticing argument of 140-pound superiority.

Gatti's stake in that claim disintegrated in six of the most lopsided rounds in pay-per-view history. Besides tipping his punches, Gatti also lost his concentration late in the first round, after Mayweather hit him as the fighters separated themselves. Gatti had expected a break from referee Earl Morton, whose command to "stop punching" a second before the fighters broke was not accompanied by a physical action. The balky officiating produced some confusion, though Gatti ultimately caused the biggest issue by dropping his hands, complaining to Morton, and ignoring Mayweather.

A swift left hook dumped Gatti for the fight's only knockdown, 20 seconds before the first round ended.

"They tell you to protect yourself at all times," Gatti said. "I learned the hard way."

McGirt tried to soothe his troubled fighter between rounds. The 12,675 overwhelmingly pro-Gatti fans watched warily as the one-sided first round ended with a pronounced thud. Gatti seemed to fall into the crowd's negative vibe, as surely as he drew upon its positive energy so many times before.

"Arturo never really got into the fight plan, which was to work the body and break him down," McGirt said. "When the mishap occurred in the first round, he totally lost focus. You could see it in the corner. He was asking the wrong questions, about whether it was a two-point round, like he had to make that deficit up immediately. The fight plan went right out the window."

The one-sided tattooing over the next five rounds exposed what talent differential and tipped-off punches can do for an intuitive athlete such as Mayweather. The night before the fight, ESPN published one of its copious top-10 lists, entitled "Top 10 Most Dominant Current Athletes." Mayweather was listed fifth, behind cycling's Lance Armstrong, golf's Annika Sorenstam, tennis' Roger Federer, and football's Peyton Manning. A few hours later, Mayweather justified an upward movement on that list by painting a masterpiece on Gatti's face.

Gatti, outlanded 115-10 in powerpunches according to CompuBox statistics, staggered back to his corner after the final and most one-sided round of the fight. All three judges scored the sixth round 10-8 without a knockdown. The assault barely ended before Roger Mayweather—who clearly enjoyed his measure of revenge in a long-running personal rivalry with Main Events (which dates to 1984, when he lost his first world title on a first-round knockout to Rocky Lockridge) began preparing his nephew for a cranked-up onslaught in the seventh round.

"I told Floyd, 'Don't hit him in the body at all. Whatever you do, don't hit him in the

body. Hit him in his face and his head. You can't miss him. There's no sense hitting him in the body, because he's already done,'" the trainer said. "And the minute I said it, they rescued him."

As Gatti collapsed onto his stool after the sixth round, McGirt cradled the fighter's head and said, "I'm stopping it, Arturo. I love you too much." Gatti simply responded, "Okay, coach."

It was a familiar end for Mayweather, who has scored eight stoppages in 14 title fights, with four of the stoppages via between-rounds retirements—Genaro Hernandez, Carlos Gerena, Jesus Chavez, and Gatti. It also was the second briefest of Mayweather's title fights, exceeded only by his second-round stoppage of Angel Manfredy, which clinched him THE RING's 1998 Fighter of the Year honor.

Gatti, 39-7 (30), promised to resume his career at welterweight. The 33-year-old warrior looked gaunt on fight week. He declined to step on an unofficial scale on fight night, so his anticipated weight advantage over Mayweather remains unknown. But when he failed to fire inside the ring, Gatti's real advantage was none whatsoever. Or, as Mayweather said, "When he got in the ring, he didn't look as big as I thought he would."

Before the fight, Mayweather called Gatti a "paper champion" and said his 2000 non-title fight against Emanuel Augustus was a tougher challenge. Then Mayweather retracted it all, even after it proved true. The verbiage is part of the fight-week play any Mayweather opponent must endure, and Gatti reacted terribly. When Mayweather crashed Gatti's portion of a New York City press conference three days before the fight, Gatti responded by bolting from the room, then skipping his final press briefing the next day.

"This is a brutal sport," Mayweather said. "This is not like tennis or golf, it's not a gentlemen's sport; it is a brutal sport. I don't hate Arturo Gatti. He gave it his all. I respect him as a fighter. At first, I didn't respect him, but that's just talk. They're just things we say."

Mayweather's irascible nature is a different kind of sell. He had the proper entree into the pay-per-view realm in Gatti, though he still needs the right opponent for that level of promotion. He is not the ever-praiseful Oscar De La Hoya, or the boyishly rugged Ray Leonard, upon whose personalities vast followings were built. And his ebb-and-flow personal life has produced a similar moon-tide marketability.

His advisers, promoter, and television network all hope those fluctuations have flattened out on the higher plane. Mayweather embraced the big stage when the Gatti fight presented itself. His daunting next task is to prove he doesn't need the big stage, but provides it merely through his presence.

As for the attractive challenges along that journey, Mayweather said all other players at the table are caught in a terminal bluff. The pound-for-pound star who commonly calls himself "The Truth" says his 140-pound foes are playing a game they can't win.

"Against Gatti, I showed I can box, I showed my power, I showed my moving ability, I showed I can adapt to any style," Mayweather said. "Most of all, I showed I'm still undefeated. Don't ever underestimate the power of being undefeated. After God and my family, staying undefeated is the most important thing in my life. It's something I'm not giving up easy. No one who fights me, or is thinking about fighting me, should ever forget that." ■

David Mayo covers boxing for the Grand Rapids (Michigan) Press and is a regular contributor to this magazine.

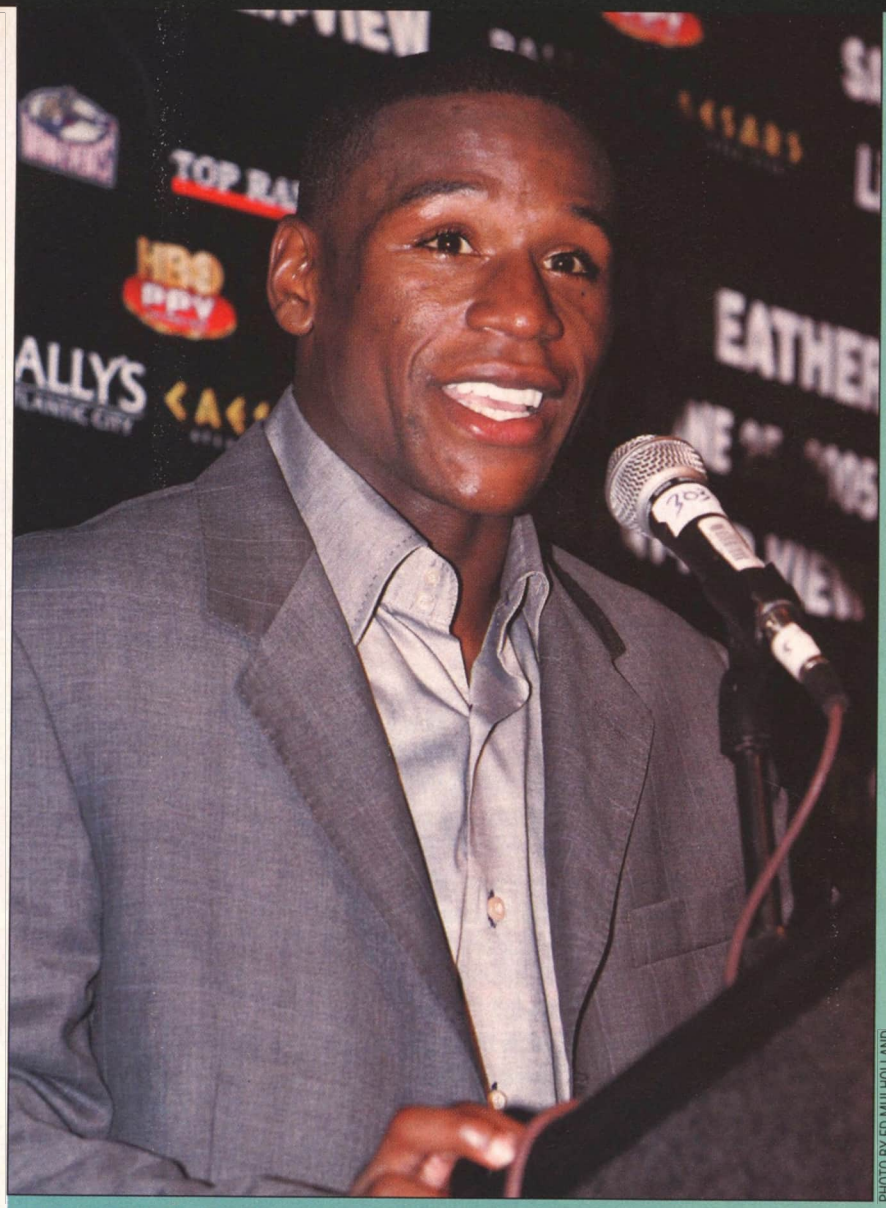


PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Although he badmouthed Gatti prior to the fight, Mayweather was much more complimentary at the postfight press conference, saying that he "respected" his beaten foe. Despite his awe-inspiring ability, Mayweather's bellicose rhetoric has hindered his appeal.

TARVER

REGAINS THE

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP

BUT TOPPING ROY JONES KAYO COULD BE THE MAGIC MAN 'S TOUGHEST TRICK

By Don Stewart

As big a game as Antonio Tarver talks, his view on where he stands in the mythical pound-for-pound rankings would figure to be as predictable as the ending to a televised police chase. Then again, the charismatic southpaw seems to enjoy keeping us on our toes.

Rather than unleashing boasts of being the top fighter in the sport, Tarver, surprisingly, shows a little humility. Number one? Top three? No. He would have to say top four or five.

Then, almost on a dime, Tarver adjusts his stance: "If you want drama, you want excitement, you want entertainment, *I'm* the pound-for-pound king." Though he follows that up with a laugh, Tarver isn't joking. His career has unfolded like the plot of an archetypal sports movie, the ones where the hero goes back to the gym after losing to the villain, rediscovers himself, then

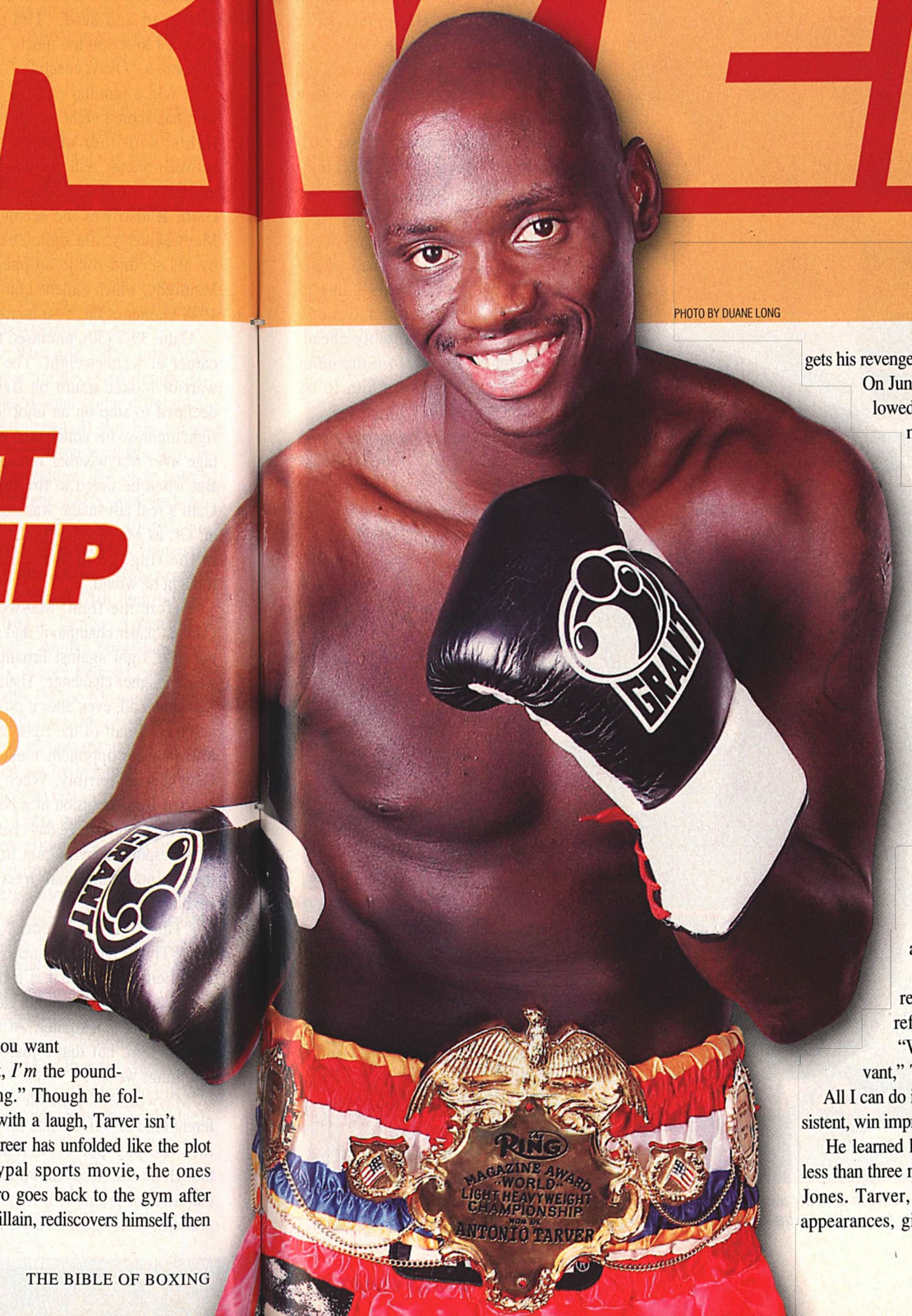


PHOTO BY DUANE LONG

gets his revenge in the big rematch just before the closing credits.

On June 18 in Memphis, Tennessee, Tarver, 23-3 (18), followed the storyline once again. With more focus and stamina than he had in his December '04 split-decision loss, Tarver regained the world light heavyweight title from Glen Johnson with a clear-cut unanimous decision. It marked the third time he's avenged a loss in a rematch, with one-time conquerors Eric Harding (TKO 5) and Roy Jones (KO 2) also feeling his wrath.

Even at 36, Tarver believes he's still improving. He wants to ride the momentum of the Johnson win into some big-money brawls that will showcase his abilities to the boxing world. But, given the outlook of the light heavyweight and adjacent divisions, Tarver might never get the opportunity to top his career-defining moment—the stunning, one-punch stoppage of Jones last May that made him a star.

What could? Winning third fights with Jones or Johnson? Beating any of the division's quartet of paper champions—Fabrice Tiozzo, Clinton Woods, Tomasz Adamek, and Zsolt Erdei? Knocking off super middleweight Joe Calzaghe? Making an assault on the tedious heavyweight division?

By no fault of Tarver, his star might have reached its zenith. It's something he realizes, but refuses to fret over.

"Would I ever top knocking out Roy Jones is irrelevant," Tarver said. "It happened. I'll be remembered by it. All I can do is continue to build on my legacy. I have to stay consistent, win impressively, and continue to be dominant."

He learned his lesson from the first Johnson fight, which came less than three months after Johnson's stunning ninth-round kayo of Jones. Tarver, in the meantime, had been busy making public appearances, giving interviews, and running the party circuit in

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS/HBO

Tarver cracks Johnson with a right hook. Although neither man was ever in serious danger of going down, it was another hard-fought contest and the fighters gave HBO's audience and the crowd of approximately 11,000 at the FedEx Forum in Memphis an entertaining fight.

The proof of his preparation was in his punch volume. According to CompuBox, the southpaw set a blistering pace early on, averaging 83 shots a round from rounds two through six. Unlike the first fight, which Tarver fought largely in reverse, he kept moving forward. Johnson's eyes were swelling by the fifth round, when the Jamaican began a vicious body assault in hopes of slowing Tarver.

After winning that round, Johnson continued going to the body in the sixth. Tarver, however, responded with his busiest round of the night, as he threw 102 punches and landed 29, both highs for the fight. He slowed down a little from there, and Johnson had some success going to the body again in the eighth and ninth. Though Tarver was comfortably ahead, McGirt was in his face before the ninth and 10th rounds, imploring him to be more aggressive.

Johnson, who never got in a rhythm and mostly landed one punch at a time, brought the crowd to its feet in the 11th when he went for the knockout. Finally the aggressor, he waded through Tarver's com-

anticipation of a third fight with Jones. He never regained his focus for Johnson, whose relatively short layoff between fights worked to his advantage.

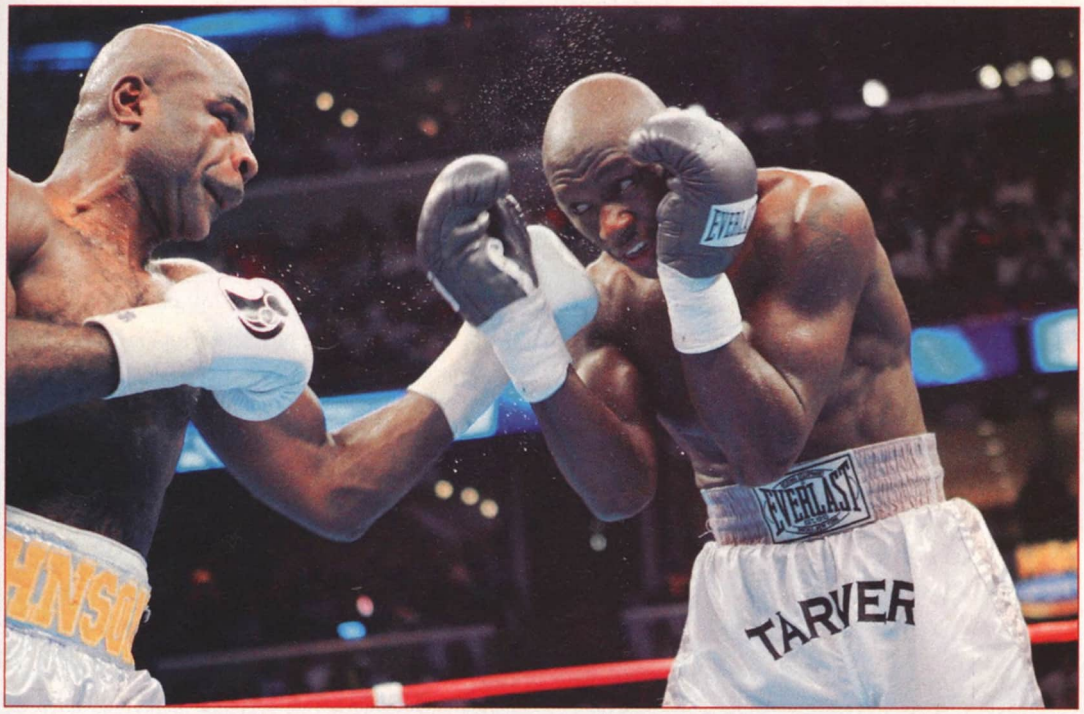
The shorter Johnson's pace and pressure proved to be too much for Tarver. "I was ill-prepared for the first fight," he said. "I felt that fight was rushed on me. We gave Glen Johnson all the advantages, coming off that fight with Roy Jones. We gave up the advantage. We didn't give ourselves proper time to prepare. If I'd have been a professional about my career and committed myself all the time, it wouldn't have been a problem. But you live and learn. It took a loss on my record to learn."

Tarver went about his business with added incentive this time around, rarely opening the doors of his Vero Beach, Florida, training camp to any outside distractions. He even turned down an invitation to a party at the White House three weeks before the fight.

"He listened, he did everything I told him to," trainer Buddy McGirt said. "Once he's focused and on point, there ain't nobody that's gonna beat him."

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS/HBO

While Johnson held his own on the inside, the taller, quicker Tarver controlled the action on the outside, frequently penetrating the defending champion's guard with straight punches up the middle.



PHOTOS BY JAN SANDERS/HBO

Although there was no disputing that Tarver deserved the decision, it was far from a one-sided fight. Johnson fought hard to retain the title and landed his share of good shots (top), but Tarver generally came back with something just as good or better (above).

bos to land a handful of big shots that backed "The Magic Man" up. Johnson seemed spent in the 12th, however, when Tarver tied him up for three minutes to seal the unanimous verdict. Judges David Huston and John Rupert both scored it 116-112, while Rocky Young saw it 115-113.

"A better fighter beat me tonight," said the 36-year-old Johnson, who fell to 42-10-2 (28). "He was a little craftier. He beat me to the punch. Every time I got close, he would slip under me and slide out. He would get away from me and I would have to reset. I didn't make the proper adjustments to get him when he would go under me. But I have to take my hat off to Antonio Tarver. The fight was a close fight like the first one, but I believe he won the fight. I don't have any excuses."

"I'm gonna be in good shape from now on," said Tarver, who returned to the gym a week after regaining the title. His New York-based promoter, Joe DeGuardia, anticipates an October return. While both Tarver and Johnson advocated a third fight before leaving the ring at the FedEx Forum, the focus shifted to a third fight with Jones shortly thereafter.

The week after Tarver-Johnson II, DeGuardia said he was in talks with Jones. After moving down from heavyweight, Jones, 49-3 (38), won a close decision against Tarver in November of 2003 before getting stopped in the rematch six months later. The kayo loss to Johnson then proved that it was more than just a lucky punch that sealed his fate against Tarver.

DeGuardia and Tarver indicated that the biggest stumbling block to a third fight was

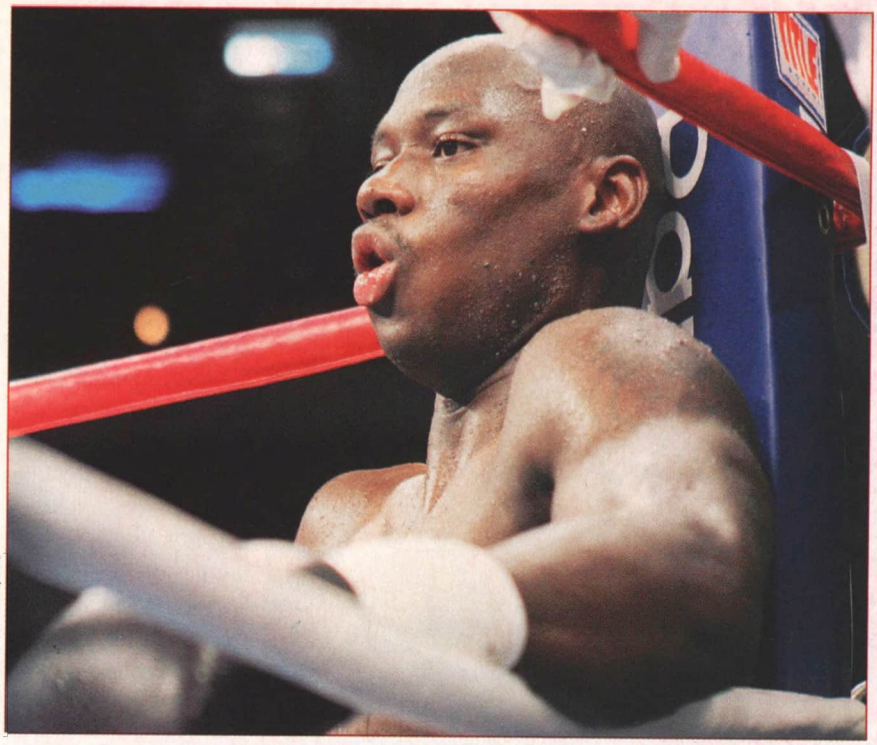


PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS/HBO

Tarver takes a deep breath between rounds of his rematch with Johnson. Clearly, he came into this fight in better shape than their first encounter last December.

getting Jones to agree on a smaller purse, something that seems foreign to his ego. On hand in Memphis as a color commentator for HBO, Jones told *USA Today* that he could beat either Tarver or Johnson, and that a rematch with middleweight champ Bernard Hopkins might be the fight that lures him out of retirement.

"Roy Jones has been screaming Hopkins," Tarver said. "It shows he wants to run and hide and pick and choose. All that fight does is fatten his wallet. I don't think the public should be sold on that fight when he's coming off two knockout losses. He should have to earn his way back. If Roy Jones is serious about boxing, there's only one way back, and that's through me. I think Jones and Tarver would be a bigger fight than Jones and Hopkins."

What about Tarver and Hopkins? "The Executioner," who was scheduled to defend July 16 against unbeaten Jermain Taylor, has mentioned the Tarver-Johnson II winner as a possible future opponent. It's a salivating matchup that would, at the very least, result in some entertaining press conferences. More importantly, it might be the best chance for Tarver to better the kayo of Jones.

"It's difficult," DeGuardia said. "Obviously, the knockout over Roy Jones was a thrilling moment. It's hard to duplicate that. I don't know if he can top that. It was a real sensational time. However, there are certainly guys out there who have marquee names, such as Bernard Hopkins, though I think Hopkins would be crazy to fight Antonio. If Tarver could score a knockout there, that would be a career-defining moment."

"As far as marquee value, I think that could be the biggest fight in the last five years," Tarver said. "We're the best two talkers in the business. Hopkins is a Philadelphia fighter. He hasn't lost in forever. Mr. Consistent. I would train like the dickens for that fight, because I know Hopkins would bring it. I would give myself a little bit of an edge in power. But Hopkins is tough. He's a seasoned vet. He can take it. I would have to give myself a training camp like the one I just had. I would see myself pulling out a decision late, if not stopping him late. I think it's a fight that should happen, and I'm all for it."

Tarver preemptively washed his hands of blame in the event that fights with Jones and Hopkins never materialize. If they don't happen, he said, it's because the other side didn't come to the table, didn't want what was best for boxing. It's a smart

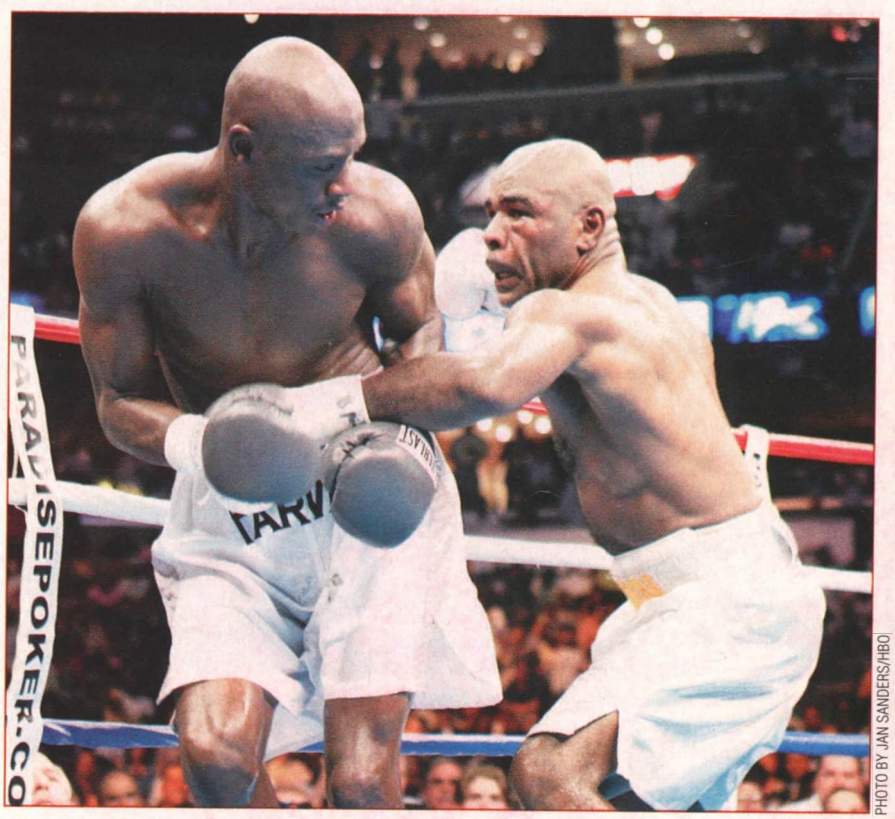


PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS/HBO

Johnson made a late surge in the 11th round to have Tarver under heavy pressure, but the Miami-based Jamaican appeared to have exhausted himself in the process and had little left for the final round.

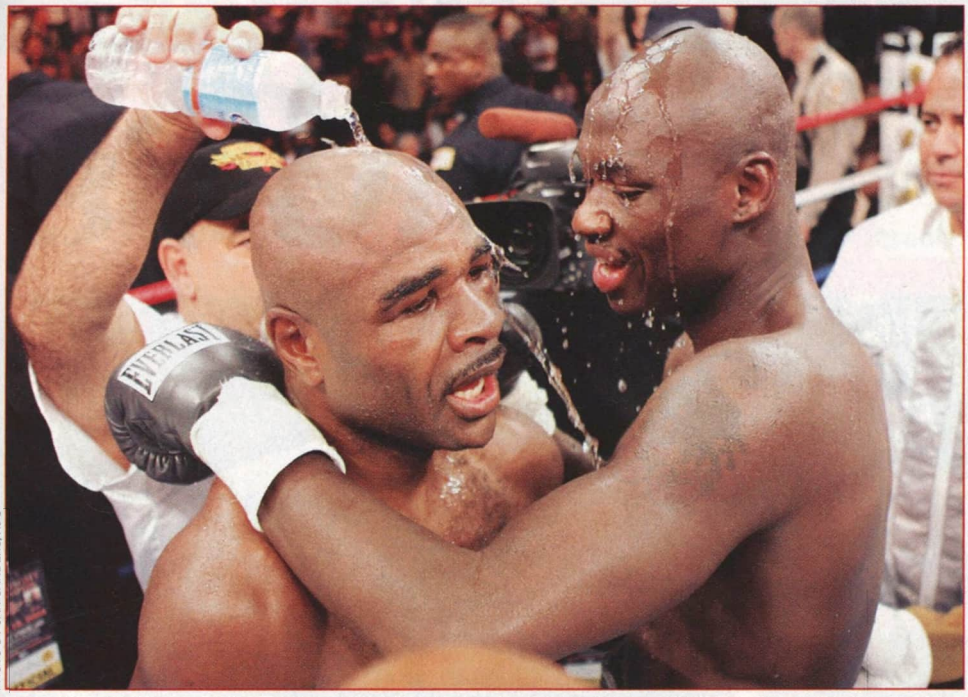


PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS/HBO

Johnson and Tarver embrace at the conclusion of their rematch. Both impressed everyone with their sportsmanship, and there's a possibility they could fight a third time.

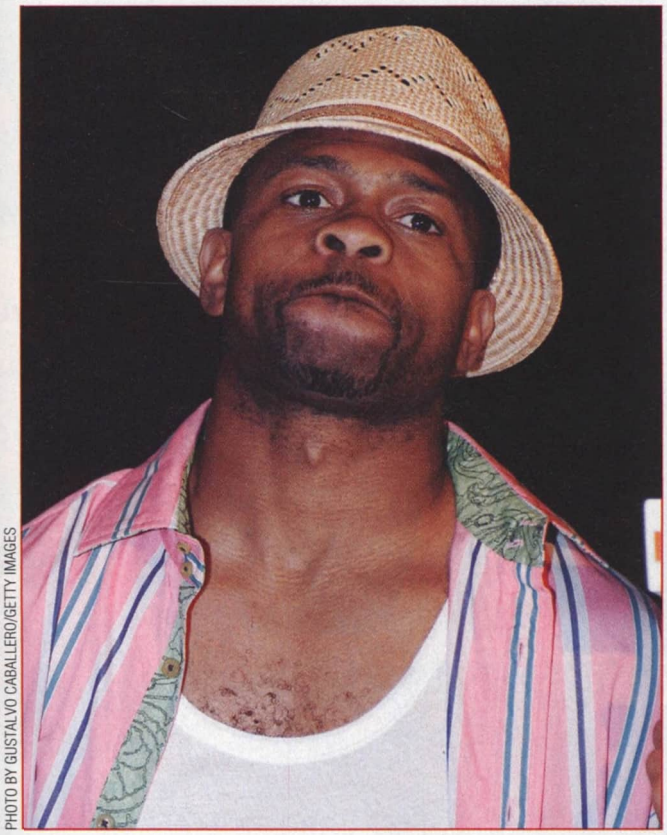
play—Jones and Hopkins are tougher to negotiate with than the PLO.

A third fight with Johnson seems the most likely scenario, though the risks outweigh the rewards for Tarver. The first two bouts were close, competitive and fast-paced, but hardly the light heavyweight version of the Gatti-Ward trilogy, as HBO's Jim Lampley suggested. And it certainly wouldn't give Tarver the type of attention he's now seeking. "I feel like, right now, I'm a couple fights away from being a household name," he said.

That's the ending Tarver would like to write to his story, but producing that script will take as much luck outside the ring as anything he can do inside of it. His goal is to be able to say he beat everyone he was in the ring with when he retires. Realistically, maybe that's the best he'll do. And isn't that plenty?

"Right now, to try to look at trying to top that, it wouldn't make any sense," McGirt said of the Jones kayo. "The only thing that makes sense is going out there and doing what we do, beating anybody they put in front of us." ■

Don Stewart covers boxing for the Reading (Pennsylvania) Eagle and is a regular contributor to this magazine.



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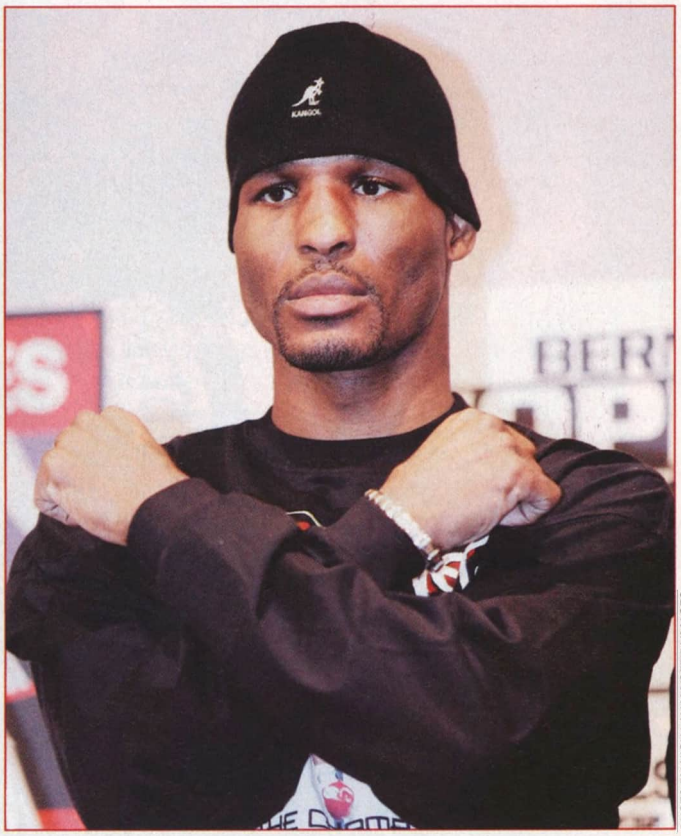
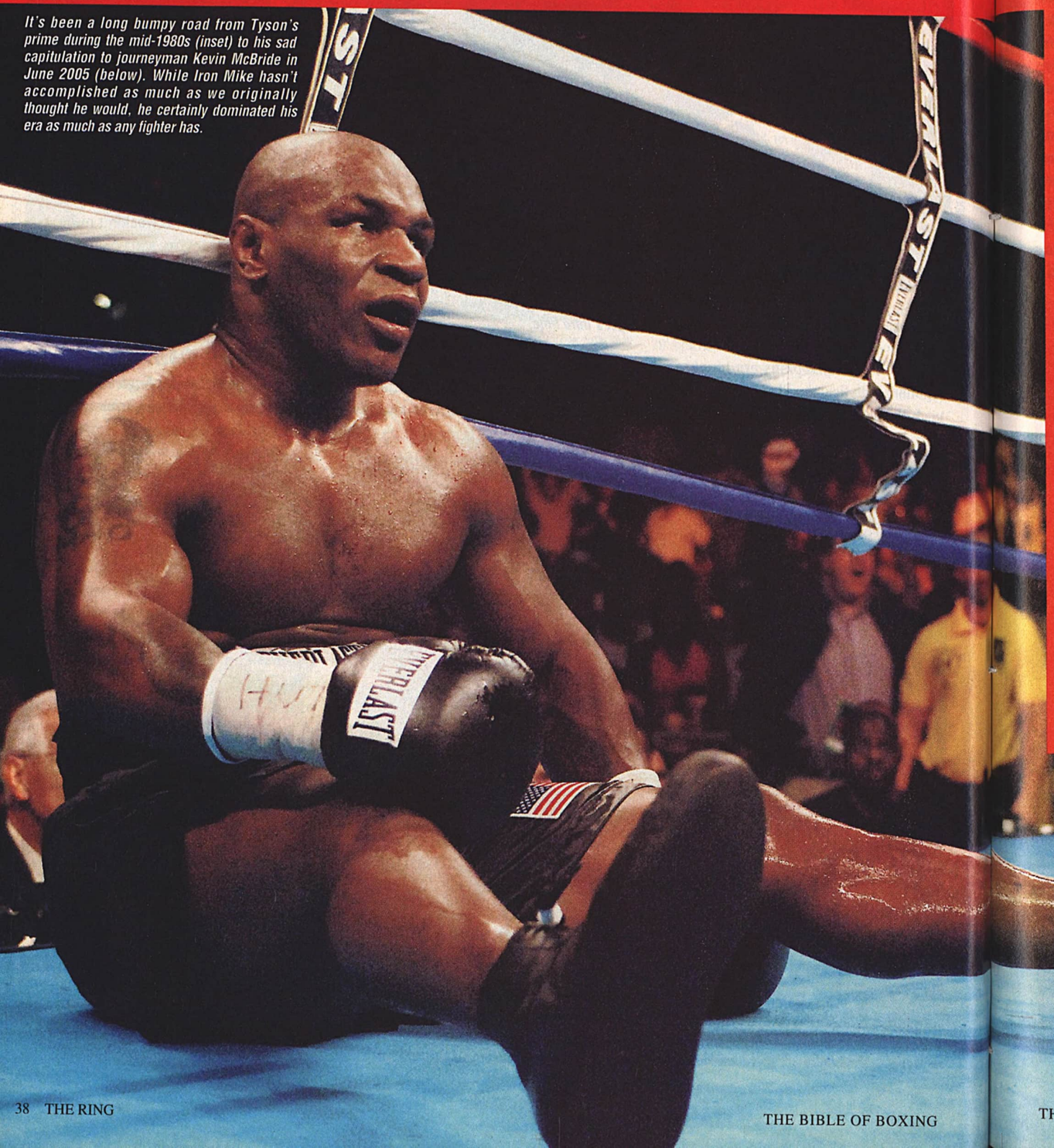


PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

Tarver's future: A third match with Jones (left) has been talked about, but if middleweight champion Bernard Hopkins (right) gets past Jermain Taylor, he would make a more attractive foe for the light heavyweight king. Ironically, Jones is also talking about a fight with "The Executioner."

THE ONLY QUESTION LEFT IS TYSON



It's been a long bumpy road from Tyson's prime during the mid-1980s (inset) to his sad capitulation to journeyman Kevin McBride in June 2005 (below). While Iron Mike hasn't accomplished as much as we originally thought he would, he certainly dominated his era as much as any fighter has.

TO ASK... HALL OF FAME BOUND?

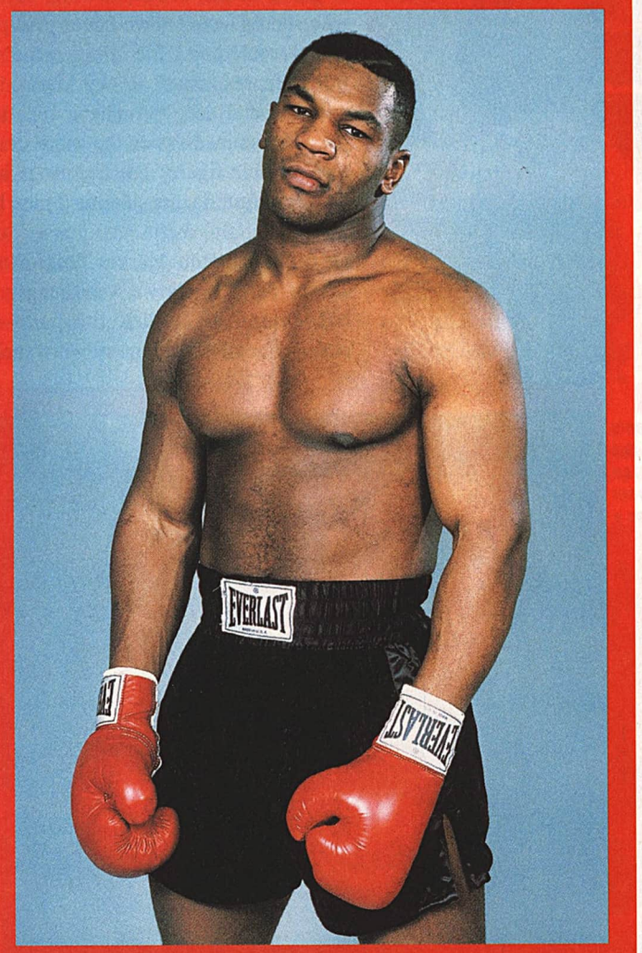


PHOTO BY MITCHELL LAYTON/GETTY IMAGES

By Don Stradley

After his humiliating loss to Kevin McBride last June in Washington, D.C., Mike Tyson received a standing ovation at the postfight press conference. Tyson downplayed the adulation; he knew there was a lot of crap in the air.

The love-fest was especially odd since only an hour earlier Tyson had been trying to snap McBride's arm off at the shoulder. There's a saying in boxing that a fighter's punch is the last thing to go; in Tyson's case, the punch was gone, but he'll still be able to have a mental meltdown when he's 60. Tyson's trainer, Jeff Fenech, stopped the fight after the sixth round. Fenech was like a relative ushering a drunken uncle out of a party before he does something stupid. And according to McBride, Tyson added another grotesque chapter to his legacy.

"He bit my nipple," McBride told a London tabloid. "I didn't realize it at first, but he had his teeth around it. Good job he wasn't a midget, otherwise he would have bitten something else."

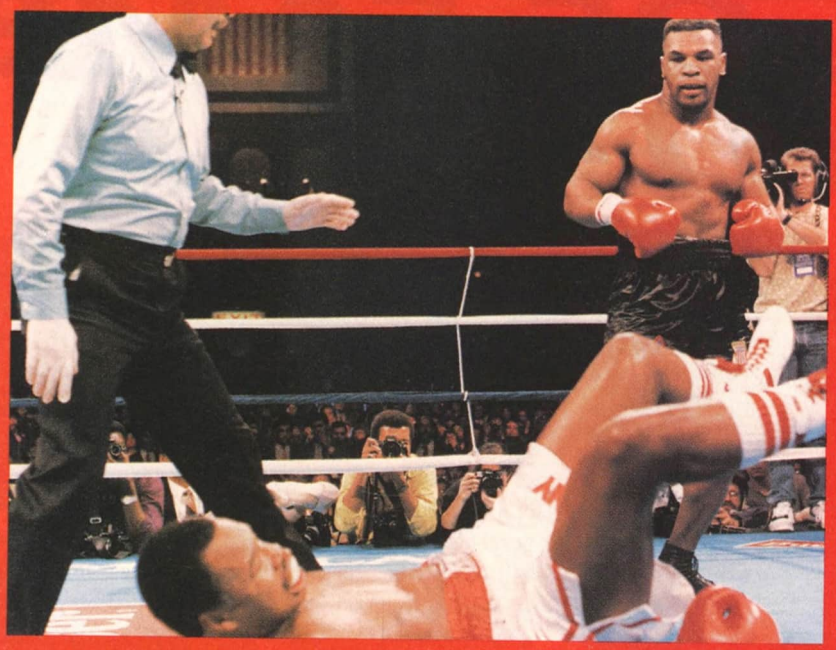
After the fight, Tyson realized there was no reason to act tough. Instead, "Mellow Mike" outlined an improbable future of missionary work. He also revealed his feelings about the sport that made him infamous.

"I don't want to be remembered at all," Tyson told ESPN. "I won't go in the Hall of Fame. I'm just not that guy anymore. The WBC invited me to be one of the 20 greatest fighters of all-time, but I'm not going to do that. I hate the boxing game."

Tyson's comment about the Hall of Fame brings up a loaded topic. Considering the number of debacles in his career, does Tyson even deserve to be inducted?

Sentimental types describe Tyson as a case of wasted potential, a Darryl Strawberry of the ring who allowed personal problems to derail his career. But that's what usually happens with teenage prodigies. The truth is that he was an undisciplined lug who was living in barbaric luxury by age 22. That such a volatile, unbalanced person achieved anything at all is quite remarkable.

He was the youngest man to ever win a heavyweight title, winning the WBC strap at 20. He made nine defenses during his first run as titleholder and unified the division when it was in a shambles. During his career he defeated nine men who'd worn alphabet belts. Those are respectable numbers. Still, the scarcity of great names in Tyson's win column is alarming. Larry Holmes and Michael Spinks were the key scalps in his



collection, but the former was past his prime and the latter was a frightened light heavyweight. And Tyson's period of dominance, 1986-1989, was short, considering how weak the field was at the time.

Back in the 1980s, boxing writers who should have known better predicted Tyson would break Joe Louis' record for title defenses, smash Rocky Marciano's undefeated streak, and maybe even surpass Muhammad Ali as the sport's most recognizable figure. The accolades bordered on hysteria, considering Tyson had done nothing to merit such praise. Sure, he'd only beaten Marvis Frazier and Trevor Berbick, but we were hungry for heroes and he looked the part—no champ since Jack Dempsey wore such a

The most accomplished names on the winning side of Tyson's ledger are undoubtedly Larry Holmes and Michael Spinks. But when Tyson kayoed Holmes in 1988 (above), "The Easton Assassin" was several years past his prime. Spinks, whom Tyson iced in less than one round the same year (below), was a blown-up light heavyweight virtually paralyzed with fear.

good sneer. Besides, the thinking went, if he was that good at 20, imagine him at 25 or 30. But by age 23, Tyson was on his hands and knees in Tokyo, fumbling for the gumshield that Buster Douglas had knocked out of his mouth.

We know there's a risk in trying to measure a fighter's greatness. Boxing isn't baseball, with handy stats and milestones to look at. But traditionally, and this is where Tyson falls short, a great fighter's career has a storybook quality to it. Think of Marciano, behind on points and bleeding, but finding a way to prevail. Or Dempsey, flying out of the ring courtesy of Luis Firpo, but coming back to win, or Louis finally catching up to Billy Conn. Sure, Marciano's opponents were usually older guys, Firpo had limited skills, and Conn was merely a light heavyweight. But in these cases we're not talking about whom a fighter beats; we're talking about what a fighter reveals about himself during a tough fight. When the heat was on, Tyson wilted.

Along with pulling fights out of the fire, the great ones know the importance of avenging their losses. But when the subject of rematches came up in a recent Q&A with ESPN, Tyson dismissed the subject.

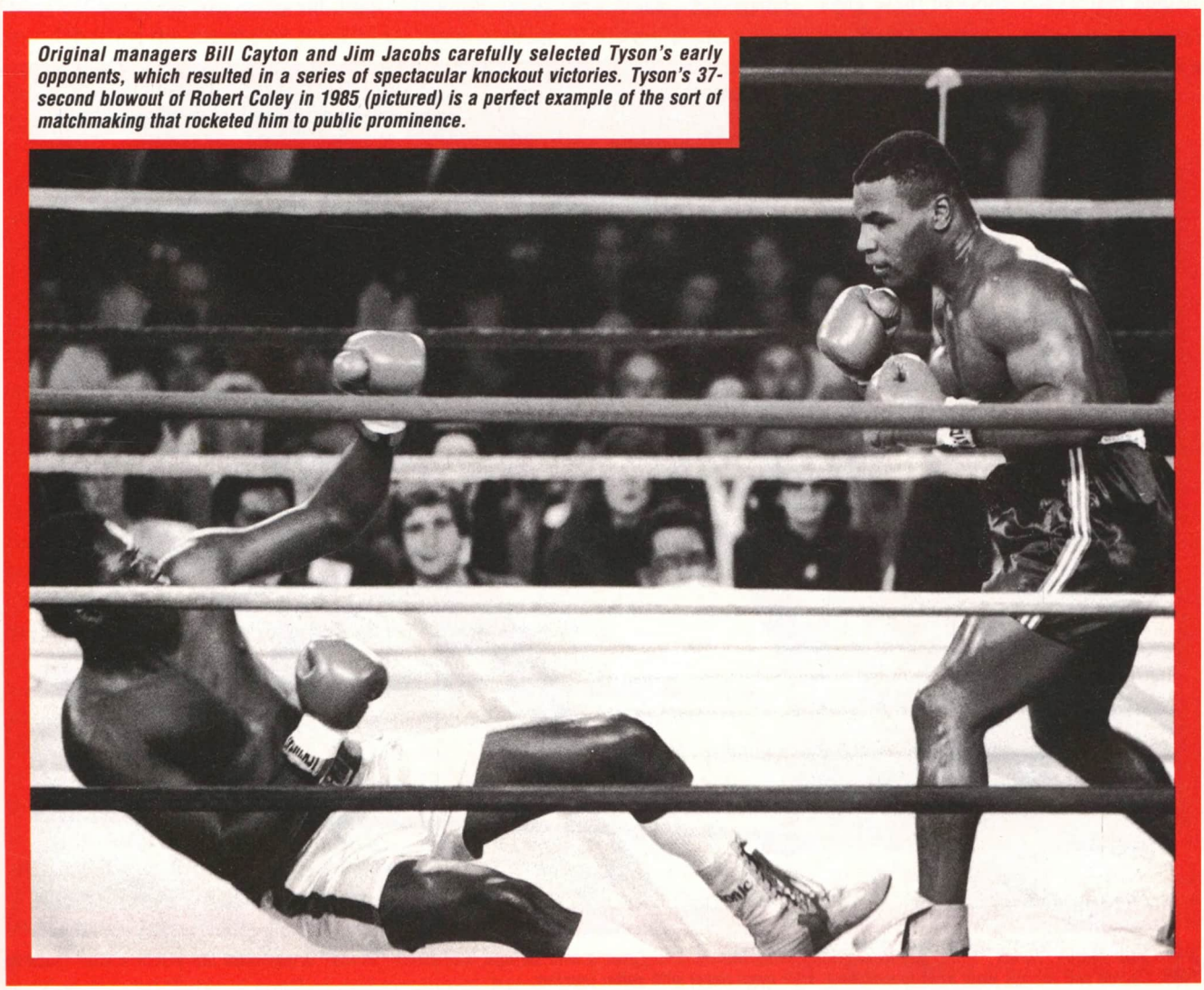
"Things happen the way they are meant to be," Tyson said when asked why a rematch with Buster Douglas never took place. "I won the title again. I went to jail, came back, and won the title. That was more spectacular than if I had regained it from Buster Douglas."

Perhaps. But it's impossible to imagine Louis or Ali not seeking revenge against Max Schmeling or Joe Frazier. Tyson had one chance to even the score with someone; he panicked and bit the guy's ears.

The great ones also have a late career renaissance. Examples: Roberto Duran at 36 won the WBC middleweight title by defeating the younger, stronger Iran Barkley. Ray Leonard came out of retirement to win a decision over the seemingly invincible Marvelous Marvin Hagler. Tyson did nothing late in his career besides act foolish.

So if Tyson wasn't an Ali or a Louis, what the heck was he?

If anything, Tyson was an amalgam of Sonny Liston and Primo Carnera. He



Original managers Bill Cayton and Jim Jacobs carefully selected Tyson's early opponents, which resulted in a series of spectacular knockout victories. Tyson's 37-second blowout of Robert Coley in 1985 (pictured) is a perfect example of the sort of matchmaking that rocketed him to public prominence.

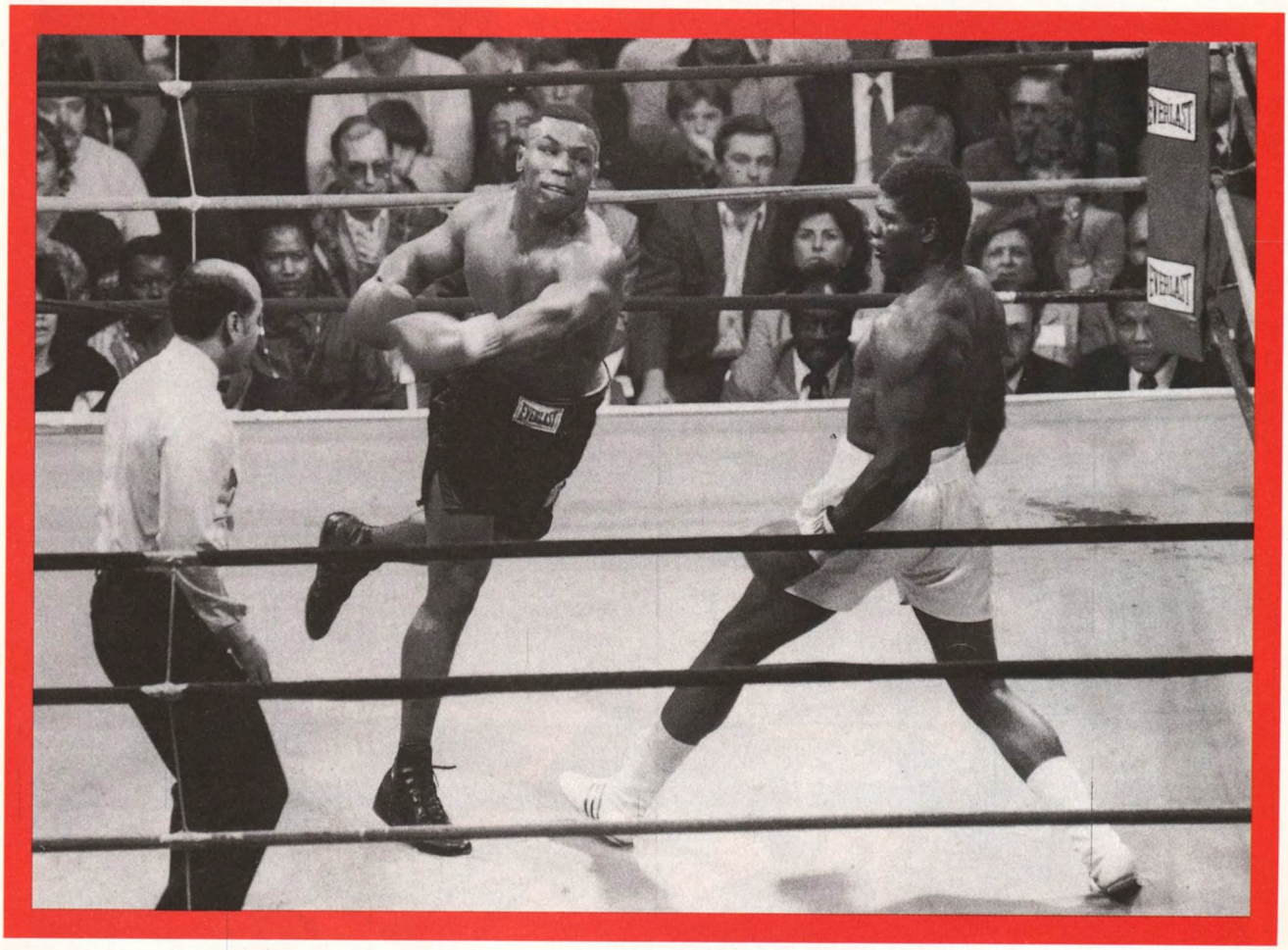
had Sonny's menace and Carnera's publicity machine. Some will be aghast at the mention of Carnera, a dubious champ whose fights were often fixed by gangsters, but Tyson's managers, Jim Jacobs and Bill Cayton, did a job for Tyson that even Carnera's mob connections would have admired. The plan from the start was maximum ballyhoo with minimal risk.

Tyson's early opponents were chinny and smallish, perfect pigeons for him to pound on. Cayton and Jacobs, serious collectors of fight films, spliced footage of Tyson's early knockouts into a tape loop and sent the collection to members of the press, like owners of a movie studio trying to impress the voters at Academy Award time. The campaign worked. It helped that Tyson knocked these guys around the ring like Popeye after a 40-ounce can of spinach.

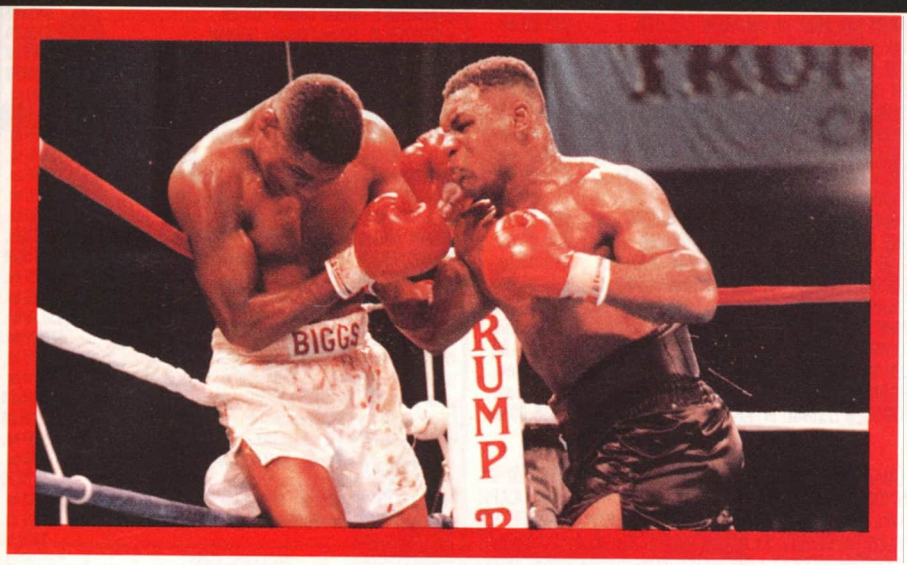
When asked in 1986 about the quality of his opponents, Tyson said, "Maybe I like weaker prey because they make me look good." For Tyson and his handlers, looking good was paramount. The push to make him the youngest heavyweight champion ever was because Tyson's camp knew they couldn't waste time. The style Tyson used—hand speed and constant pressure—works best at a young age. Plus, Tyson's personality was bound to land him in trouble sooner or later.

After he failed to score knockouts over James Tillis and Mitch Green, Tyson was immediately matched with three journeymen so he could look vicious again. We can't say it enough: Jacobs and Cayton were sharp. Without them, Tyson would have been another Earnie Shavers, a guy who could hit hard enough to shake the walls of a city but lacked the essential ingredients to be great. And because Cus D'Amato was a favorite of New York sportswriters, Tyson usually received good press. If you weren't praising Mike, you were denied access to him. This created an iron bubble of hype.

By then the arguments that would be kicked around for the next 15 years were in place. Tyson's supporters insisted he was "The Baddest Man On The Planet"; his critics said otherwise. His fans talked about the excitement he generated; his critics recalled how Tyson's pay-per-view customers usually wanted their money back. His fans said he revived the sport; his critics said he ruined the sport.



When both James "Quick" Tillis, pictured pulling away from one of Tyson's wild swings, and Mitch "Blood" Green went the distance with Tyson in 1986, Cayton and Jacobs went back to matching their meal ticket with softer touches.



Tyson didn't make the U.S. Olympic team, so he was especially pleased when he knocked out Olympic gold medalist Tyrell Biggs in 1987.

Around and around they went, like scholars debating the merits of a certain author. And all of the debating was moot, because Tyson's psychic grip on his public was unshakable.

For a generation weaned on rap music and the real-life bloodshed of inner-city life, Tyson became a kind of voodoo priest, acting out the violent fantasies of his cult. It's true that many of his fans were just celebrity-gawkers who wouldn't recognize a good fighter if Erik Morales hit them in the mouth, but their loyalty was astonishing. Tyson could fight Peter McNeeley once a year for the rest of his life and his fans would buy tickets. Competitive fights meant nothing to them. Who wants competition when you owe two months rent and your baby's mother is busting your chops? They wanted carnage. Tyson was their man. They related to his problems with women and his epic fender-benders. And Tyson's rough persona seemed more genuine than the media-friendly smiles of Leonard or Oscar De La Hoya.

The record, 50-6 (44) with 2 no-contests, and his early success makes Tyson a reasonable candidate for the International Boxing Hall of Fame, but his wild popularity is the intangible that makes him a lock. Maybe the fans were only falling for a con, just like old ladies used to fall for Tyson's con before he mugged them, but not many fighters can claim a chunk of history as their own. Dempsey, Louis, Ali, and, to a smaller degree, Leonard, had eras of their own. Tyson had his. And if that doesn't equal greatness, the IBHOF isn't solely about greatness, anyway.

Many fighters enshrined in Canastota don't deserve to be there, but they're inducted every year along with the greats. In order to pay their bills, the IBHOF needs as many recognizable names as possible so their yearly induction ceremony will draw people. Face it, if Ingemar Johansson is enshrined, then Tyson is certainly worthy.

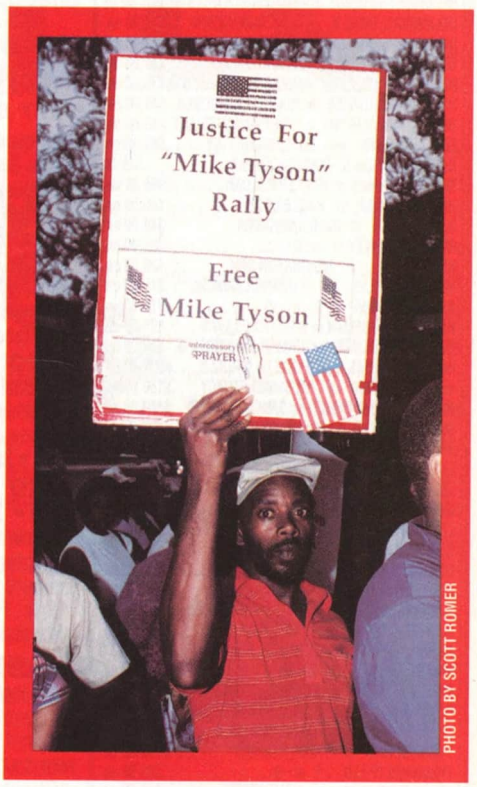
No fighter has ever been under a microscope like Tyson. Everything from the books he read in prison to his love of Kung Fu movies was scrutinized for meaning. But few ever took notice of the tiny "U.S.A." patch sewn into his black trunks. The patch had been a gift from Steve Lott, a survivor from the D'Amato days, and was a poignant reminder of Tyson's flirtation with the Olympics. He'd sparred with members of the 1984 team, but wasn't part of the lineup. Still, it's interesting to imagine a very young Tyson fantasizing about Olympic medals. He couldn't hide his glee when he whipped gold medalist Tyrell Biggs when they were both pros. "Now I consider myself a gold medal winner," Tyson told the press.

There was no gold for Tyson. And his pro career probably wasn't what he'd hoped for, either. But in retirement his achievements will take on greater significance. The negative aspects will be played down, which always happens when a fighter retires. His financial problems may bring him some sympathy. And sportswriters will begin to think of Tyson as the last of the great ones.

By the time he's eligible for Canastota, Tyson's legend will have grown. We'll think of him as something bigger and better than he really was. And that shouldn't surprise anyone.

After all, we've been doing exactly that for 20 years. ■

Don Stradley is a freelance writer from Rockport, Massachusetts, and a regular contributor to this magazine.



Despite all of his disappointing ring performances and outside of the ring problems, his fans never deserted Tyson. He seemed to strike a cord with the common man, many of whom identified with some of his troubles and supported Iron Mike even when he was incarcerated.

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An In-Depth Look At Today's 10 Best Fighters

The Pound-For-Pound Elite

By William Dettloff

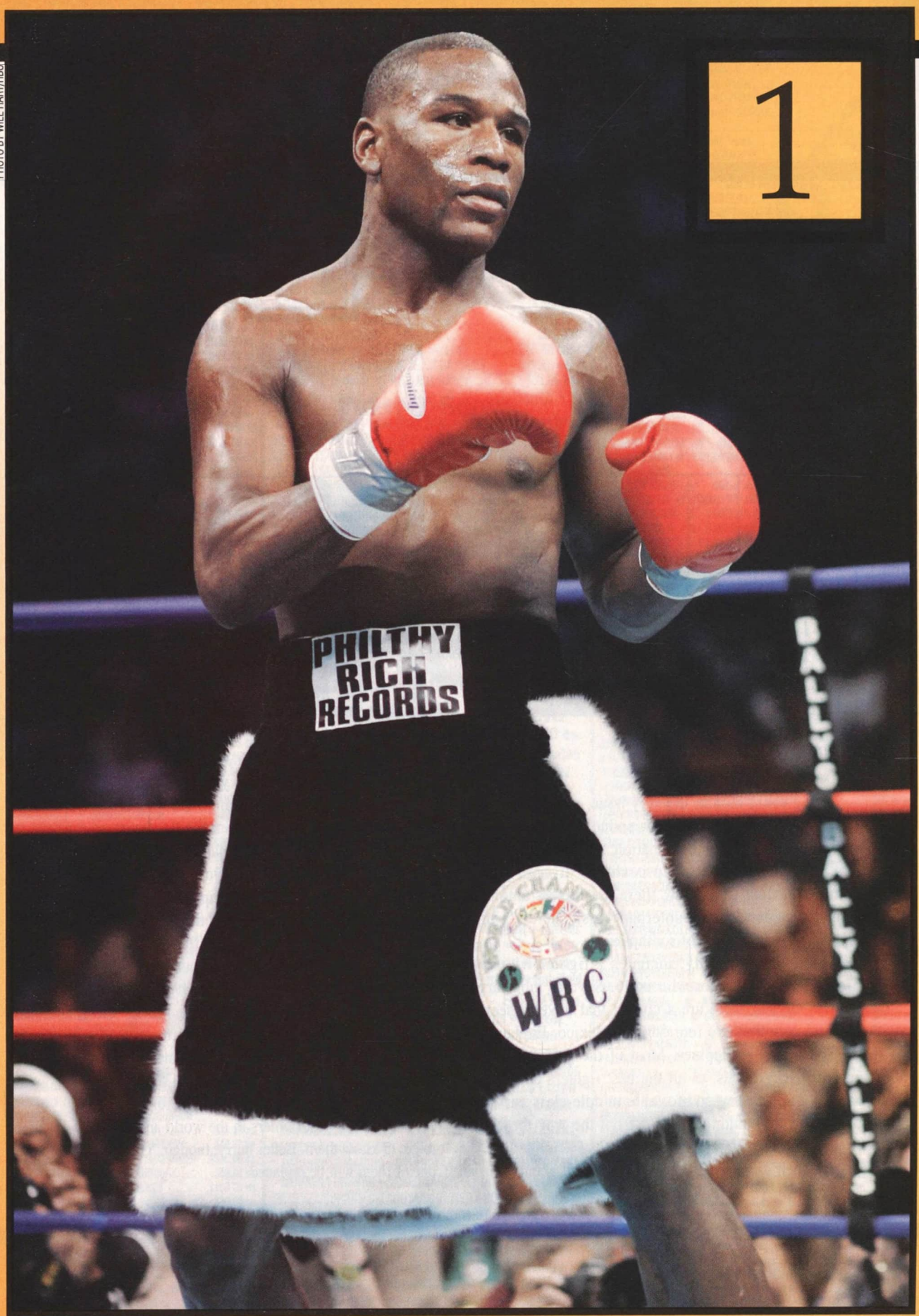
During every month, in every issue, we rank and publish THE RING's pound-for pound best. They are the athletes who, in our estimation, rank as the top prizefighters in the world. The group is always diverse, perhaps never more so than right now; there are boxers among its ranks, and punchers, and counterpunchers. There's a high-volume guy. Even a couple of southpaws.

This group, implausibly, includes a fighter who is 40 years old. There's another who is 36. Several more are in their early-30s and there are a couple that haven't seen 30 yet. Several countries are represented: Mexico, England, the United States, the Philippines. Most of the guys come from the poorest backgrounds, as all the best fighters do. But one or two grew up in very comfortable middle-class surroundings, though you wouldn't know it from the way they fight. So we won't hold it against them.

You see their names in every issue and read about them all the time, and watch them fight, but how well do you really know the world's best fighters? Do you know where they were born and when they started fighting? Do you know all of their strengths and weaknesses, and what the future might hold for them? Do you know who their managers and trainers are, or what world titles they've held? Do you wish you could have their important histories at your fingertips and a roll call and summary of their greatest fights? How about their complete pro records?

In this special in-depth feature, THE RING brings you as close to the best fighters in the world as you can get without a ringside seat or a press pass. We give you basic biographical information, tell you where they've been and where they're going, and grade them on every facet of their game: offense, defense, stamina, experience, quality of opposition, and more. Then we select the 10 greatest fights each of them had and summarize them, giving you the when, where, why, how, and more.

They're the best fighters in the world and now's your chance to get to know them. Better hurry, though. You never know when one of them will be replaced.


1
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PHILTHY RICH RECORDS
WORLD CHAMPION
WBC
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Floyd Mayweather

Birthdate: February 24, 1977

Birthplace: Grand Rapids, Michigan

Residence: Las Vegas, Nevada

Weight Class: Junior Welterweight

Height: 5'8"

Reach: 72"

Professional Record: 34-0 (23)

World Titles: WBC super featherweight (October 3, October 1998-April 20, 2002), World lightweight (April 20, 2002-May 22, 2004), WBC super lightweight (June 25, 2005-present)

Handlers: self-managed; Roger Mayweather, trainer

Background: Boxing pedigree runs deep; father Floyd Sr. and uncles Jeff and Roger all fought professionally. Amateur resume includes three National Golden Gloves titles and a bronze medal at the 1996 Olympics. Turned pro in '96, claimed WBC 130-pound title in 18th bout and made eight defenses. Added world lightweight title in 2002 and made three defenses before moving up to junior welterweight. Is THE RING's top-rated 140-pounder. Has never come close to losing a professional bout.

Style: Flashy, aggressive stand-up boxer/puncher

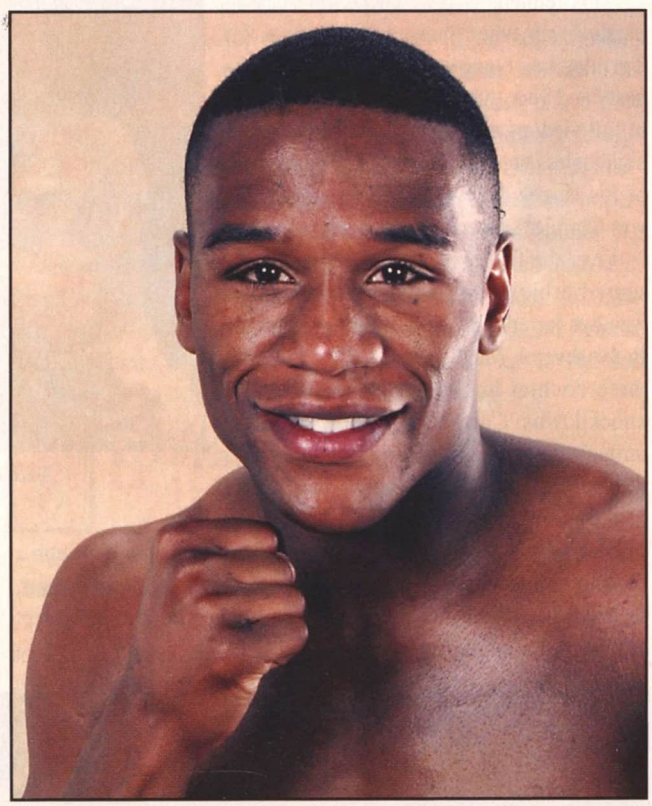
Strengths: Hand and foot speed, skills, defense, confidence

Weaknesses: Legal problems outside the ring, marketability

Best Performance: Knocked down Diego Corrales five times en route to stopping him in the 10th round in January '01 WBC super featherweight title fight

Worst Performance: Looked mediocre in May '01 fight against Carlos Hernandez, in which he injured both hands, but eked out decision win. Was officially knocked down for only time in career when pain in hand caused him to touch the canvas.

Future: Moving toward junior welterweight title fight with Ricky Hatton, or huge pay-per-view showdown with Miguel Cotto. Eventual jump to welterweight division not out of the question.



Report Card

Boxing Ability	A+
Power	B
Defense	A
Ring Generalship	A+
Experience	A
Quality of Opposition	A
Chin	A
Stamina	A+
Overall Grade	A

Floyd Mayweather's 10 Greatest Fights

1 KO 10 Diego Corrales, January 20, 2001, Las Vegas, Nevada

This remains Mayweather's finest hour, particularly when one considers how far Corrales has come in the years since. His nasty and very public dispute with his father in full view of the fight public, Mayweather nonetheless entered the most important fight of his career fully self-assured, certain he was Corrales' superior. He was right.

Over the first six rounds Corrales hardly scored a blow, and when he tried, Mayweather jarred him with stinging counters. In the seventh Mayweather walked him into three counter hooks that produced three knockdowns. Corrales somehow muddled through rounds eight and nine before Mayweather beat him to the canvas twice more in the 10th, prompting Ray Woods, Corrales' trainer and stepfather, to stop the fight. It was as thorough a beating in a superfight as you'll ever see. "This is a brutal sport, so his father did the right thing," Mayweather said after. Except this wasn't brutal. It was artistic.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Gatti took it from Mayweather until trainer McGirt called it quits

2 KO 6 Arturo Gatti, June 25, 2005, Atlantic City, New Jersey

Though the great majority of observers saw this as a rout going in, many hoped with their hearts that Gatti, perhaps in some cosmic reward for all the drama he'd provided over the years, would be able to produce an upset. Certainly, the sell-out crowd of more than 12,000 at the Boardwalk Hall hoped so. If Gatti could land something big, who knew what could happen?

Mayweather had warned everybody that it would be a mismatch and he was right. He ripped Gatti with scorching combinations in the very first round, and, when Gatti turned to referee Earl Morton to complain about his foe holding and hitting, Mayweather dropped him with a left hook. Gatti's left eye was nearly closed by the third and Mayweather took him apart in rounds, four, five, and six, leading Gatti's trainer, Buddy McGirt, to stop it after the sixth. Simply, Gatti couldn't land and Mayweather couldn't miss. "He gave it his all. I respect him as a fighter," Mayweather said.

Mayweather-Corrales shockingly turned out to be a mismatch

Mayweather erased all doubts in Castillo rematch

3 W 12 Jose Luis Castillo, December 7, 2002, Las Vegas, Nevada

To fans of Castillo, this fight couldn't come soon enough. To them it was to be the day their man got recognition for doing something they thought he did in the first match between these two: whip Mayweather clearly. Mayweather, for his part, didn't see what all the fuss was about. He called their first match an easy win, but hey, if the people wanted to see a rematch, he was all for it.

Castillo fans had little to cheer about after all. Making his first defense of the world lightweight title, Mayweather controlled from the outset, keeping Castillo at a distance with his jab and fighting effectively off the ropes when the mood struck him. Castillo is too good not to have gotten some work done, and he did bloody Mayweather's mouth during the middle rounds. But Mayweather's speed and skills made the difference and it wasn't as close as the scores—116-113 and 115-113 (twice)—indicated.

4 KO 8 Genaro Hernandez, October 3, 1998, Las Vegas, Nevada

There comes a fight for every fighter that lets us all know whether he's going to be something or not be something. There was every reason to think Hernandez would turn back Mayweather here. After all, we already knew Hernandez was something, as he'd never lost a fight at 130 pounds. Mayweather had never faced anyone approaching his level, and when Floyd and his father/trainer, Floyd Sr., ridiculed Hernandez before the fight, it appeared not only disrespectful, but also foolish.

Turned out the Mayweathers knew something we didn't. "Pretty Boy" was far too fast for Hernandez and beat him to the punch repeatedly. Not only that, but he was stronger too and hurt Hernandez whenever he banged off a combination. "Chicanito" saw the writing on the wall and was never one who needed stern convincing. He relinquished the fight and the WBC super featherweight title by staying on his stool after the eighth round.

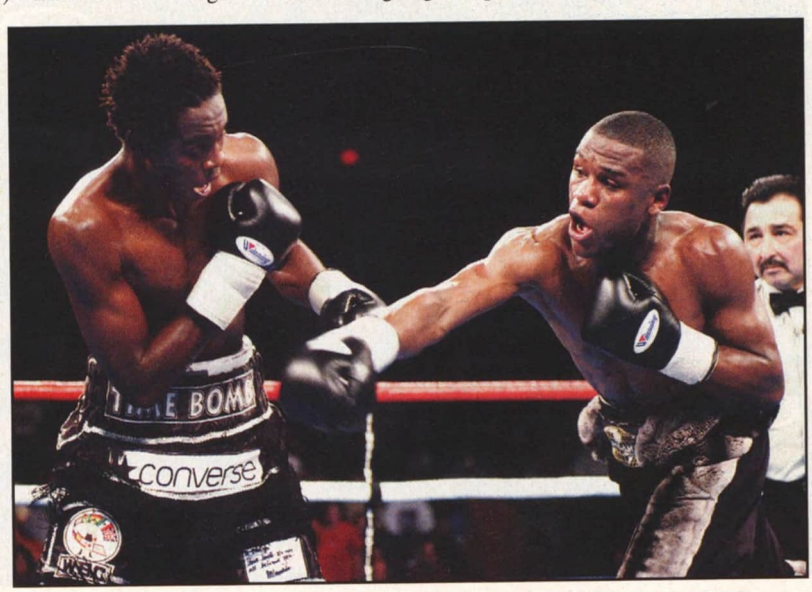
5 KO 9 Jesus Chavez, November 10, 2001, San Francisco, California

The first title fight in San Francisco in 40 years would be the last one at junior lightweight for Mayweather, who admitted to having considerable trouble making the 130-pound weight limit. That had to be good news for Chavez, who had already established himself as one of the game's better bodypunchers.

Chavez held up his side of the bargain, whaling away at Mayweather's flanks whenever he got close. Problem was Mayweather didn't slow down, and instead took the opportunity to drill Chavez with uppercuts. Chavez made it dramatic in spots by burying his head in Mayweather's chest and impersonating a windmill, but Mayweather was never in trouble. He staggered Chavez in the ninth, barely missing a punch all round, which convinced Chavez trainer Ronnie Shields to keep his fighter in the corner. "I look forward to moving up to 135 and fighting Paul Spadafora, Jose Castillo, and hopefully moving to 140 and fighting Kostya Tszyu," Mayweather said afterward.

6 KO 7 Phillip Ndou, November 1, 2003, Grand Rapids, Michigan

With all the short, squat swarmers Mayweather had beaten—see Chavez, Castillo, et al—you could forgive the fight public for wanting to know how he'd handle a tall, strong lightweight. Enter Ndou. A dangerous right-hand puncher riding a 21-fight winning streak (with 20 knockouts), Ndou walked into the ring for his shot at the lightweight world title weighing 147 pounds. Bigger than Mayweather,



Ndou stood tall against Floyd, but only for seven rounds

maybe stronger, and with a howitzer right hand. Maybe this was the guy to push Mayweather.

No such luck. If it was exciting it was because Mayweather made it so. Ndou was all heart and balls, but Mayweather was on fire. He did anything he wanted to poor Ndou. He boxed him. He backed him up. He punched with him. He took Ndou's best right hands, apparently to show us that he could. He broke him down, took his spirit, and when Ndou was good and ready to go, Mayweather belted him with three straight right crosses and ended it.

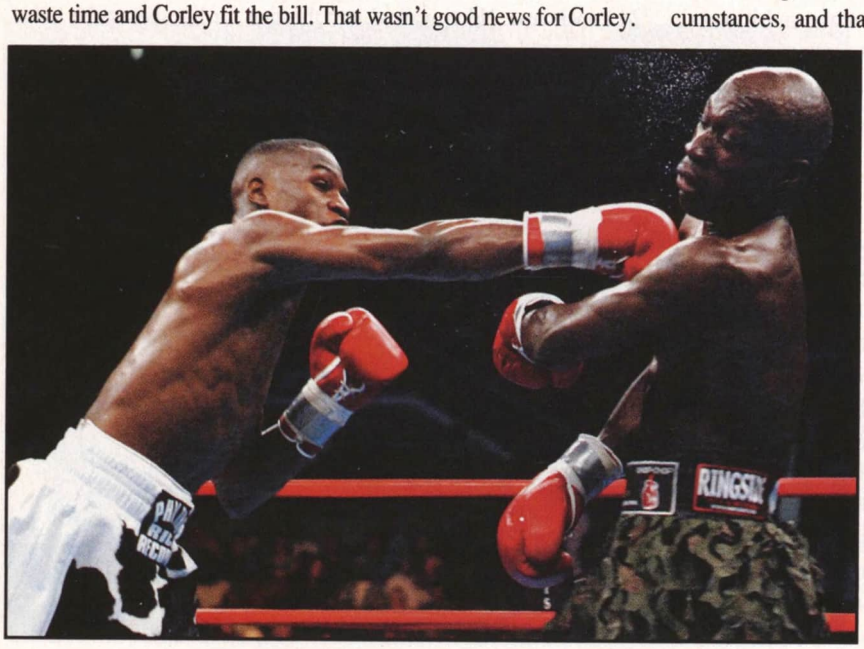
7 KO 2 Angel Manfredy, December 19, 1998, Miami, Florida

If you were looking for a good, solid contender to challenge Mayweather after he won the title, Manfredy was the guy. Almost a year after stopping Arturo Gatti in his breakout fight, Manfredy represented the best challenger out there for Mayweather. That Mayweather took him on in his very first defense said good things about Mayweather's willingness to face the best fighters. So much for the obligatory soft first title defense.

As it turned out, it couldn't have been much easier. A laser of a right cross found Manfredy's chin and staggered him near the end of the second round. Mayweather jumped on him with a barrage of shots and referee Frank Santore jumped in and called it off, probably prematurely, at 2:47 of the round. But Mayweather had already proved his point. The win, along with his domination of Hernandez, got Mayweather THE RING's 1998 Fighter of the Year award.

8 W 12 Demarcus Corley, May 22, 2004, Atlantic City, New Jersey

Mayweather could have picked an easier guy for his junior welterweight debut. Most guys would have. They wouldn't have picked a southpaw, first off. Or one who had fought well against Zab Judah and gone the distance with him. But Mayweather doesn't like to waste time and Corley fit the bill. That wasn't good news for Corley.



"Chop Chop was tough," Mayweather said after a near-shutout

Mayweather dominated from the start, looking like he'd been 140 all his life rather than the guy who'd been a champ in a class 10 pounds lighter. He dazzled Corley and the Boardwalk Hall crowd with the same sizzling combinations he'd thrown at 130 and 135. In the eighth, a blinding three-punch combination forced Corley to take a knee, and in the 10th, another multi-punch salvo dropped Corley in his tracks. Sure he lasted the distance, but scores of 119-107, 119-108, and 118-108 tell you all you need to know. "Chop Chop was a tough opponent and I knew coming in I would have to show my power," Mayweather said. He did.

9 W 12 Victoriano Sosa, April 19, 2003, Fresno, California

If you remembered Sosa's unsuccessful challenge of Paul Spadafora for the IBF lightweight title in March 2000, you had reason to give him a chance against Mayweather. Sosa's whistling right hand had nearly decapitated Spadafora, and even though Sosa sleepwalked through the rest of the fight and lost a close decision, you knew he could punch. The problem was, so did Mayweather, and Papa Mayweather didn't raise any dummies.

Fighting behind a smart left jab and good movement, Mayweather followed the adage to box the slugger and kept his jab at the tip of Sosa's nose all night. Sosa responded by hammering Mayweather's body whenever he could and, of course, launching as many overhand rights as he could muster. Some landed, most didn't, and the fun part was that Sosa didn't give up. He kept pushing Mayweather, pushing him, and Mayweather pushed back by boxing, boxing, boxing. At the end, same old story: Mayweather by a landslide: 119-109 and 118-110 (twice).

10 KO 9 Emanuel Burton, October 21, 2000, Detroit, Michigan

All the great ones manage to beat tough guys under bad circumstances, and that's what Mayweather did against Burton. He was coming off a seven-month layoff, the longest of his career, and Burton, as he would prove later against any number of guys, was nobody's soft touch. Besides that, Mayweather's chronically injured hands were in terrible shape, and the WBC super featherweight champion was experimenting at lightweight, the weight at which Burton had long resided.

Still, Mayweather stood and fought Burton, moving much less than he had in previous fights. As a result he took many more punches than we were used to seeing him take, but the talent margin between he and Burton was enormous. It was a good fight all the while, but after Burton suffered a scorching beating in the ninth, his corner stopped it. "That boy is made out of steel," Mayweather said afterward. "He might not have a great record, but there are a lot of champions out there that he could beat."

The Professional Record of Floyd Mayweather

1996		
Oct. 11	Robert Apodaca, Las Vegas	KO 2
Nov. 30	Reggie Sanders, Albuquerque, NM	W 4
1997		
Jan. 18	Jerry Cooper, Las Vegas	KO 1
Jan. 31	Edgar Ayala, Chula Vista, CA	KO 2
March 12	Kino Rodriguez, Grand Rapids, MI	KO 1
April 12	Bobby Geipert, Las Vegas	KO 1
May 9	Tony Duran, Las Vegas	KO 1
June 14	Larry O'Shields, San Antonio, TX	W 6
July 12	Jesus Chavez, Biloxi, MS	KO 4
Sept. 6	Luis Leija, El Paso, TX	KO 2
Oct. 14	Felipe Garcia, Boise, ID	KO 6
Nov. 20	Angelo Nunez, Los Angeles	KO 3
1998		
Jan. 9	Hector Arroyo, Biloxi	KO 5
Feb. 28	Sam Girard, Atlantic City	KO 2
March 23	Miguel Melo, Ledyard, CT	KO 3
April 17	Gustavo Cuello, Los Angeles	W 10
June 14	Tony Pep, Atlantic City	W 10
Oct. 3	Genaro Hernandez, Las Vegas	KO 8
	(Wins WBC Super Featherweight Title)	
Dec. 19	Angel Manfredy, Miami	KO 2
	(Retains WBC Super Featherweight Title)	
1999		
Feb. 17	Carlos Rios, Grand Rapids	W 12
	(Retains WBC Super Featherweight Title)	
May 22	Justin Juuko, Las Vegas	KO 9
	(Retains WBC Super Featherweight Title)	
Sept. 11	Carlos Gerena, Las Vegas	KO 7
	(Retains WBC Super Featherweight Title)	
2000		
March 18	Goyo Vargas, Las Vegas	W 12
	(Retains WBC Super Featherweight Title)	
Oct. 21	Emanuel Burton, Detroit	KO 9
	(Non-Title Bout)	
2001		
Jan. 20	Diego Corrales, Las Vegas	KO 10
	(Retains WBC Super Featherweight Title)	
May 26	Carlos Hernandez, Grand Rapids	W 12
	(Retains WBC Super Featherweight Title)	
Nov. 10	Jesus Chavez, San Francisco	KO 9
	(Retains WBC Super Featherweight Title)	
2002		
April 20	Jose Luis Castillo, Las Vegas	W 12
	(Wins Vacant World Lightweight Title)	
Dec. 7	Jose Luis Castillo, Las Vegas	W 12
	(Retains World Lightweight Title)	
2003		
April 19	Victoriano Sosa, Fresno, CA	W 12
	(Retains World Lightweight Title)	
Nov. 1	Philip Ndou, Grand Rapids	KO 7
	(Retains World Lightweight Title)	
2004		
May 22	DeMarcus Corley, Atlantic City	W 12
2005		
Jan. 22	Henry Bruseles, Miami, FL	KO 8
June 25	Arturo Gatti, Atlantic City	KO 6
	(Wins WBC Super Lightweight Title)	

Mayweather fires a jab en route to a unanimous decision over Sosa

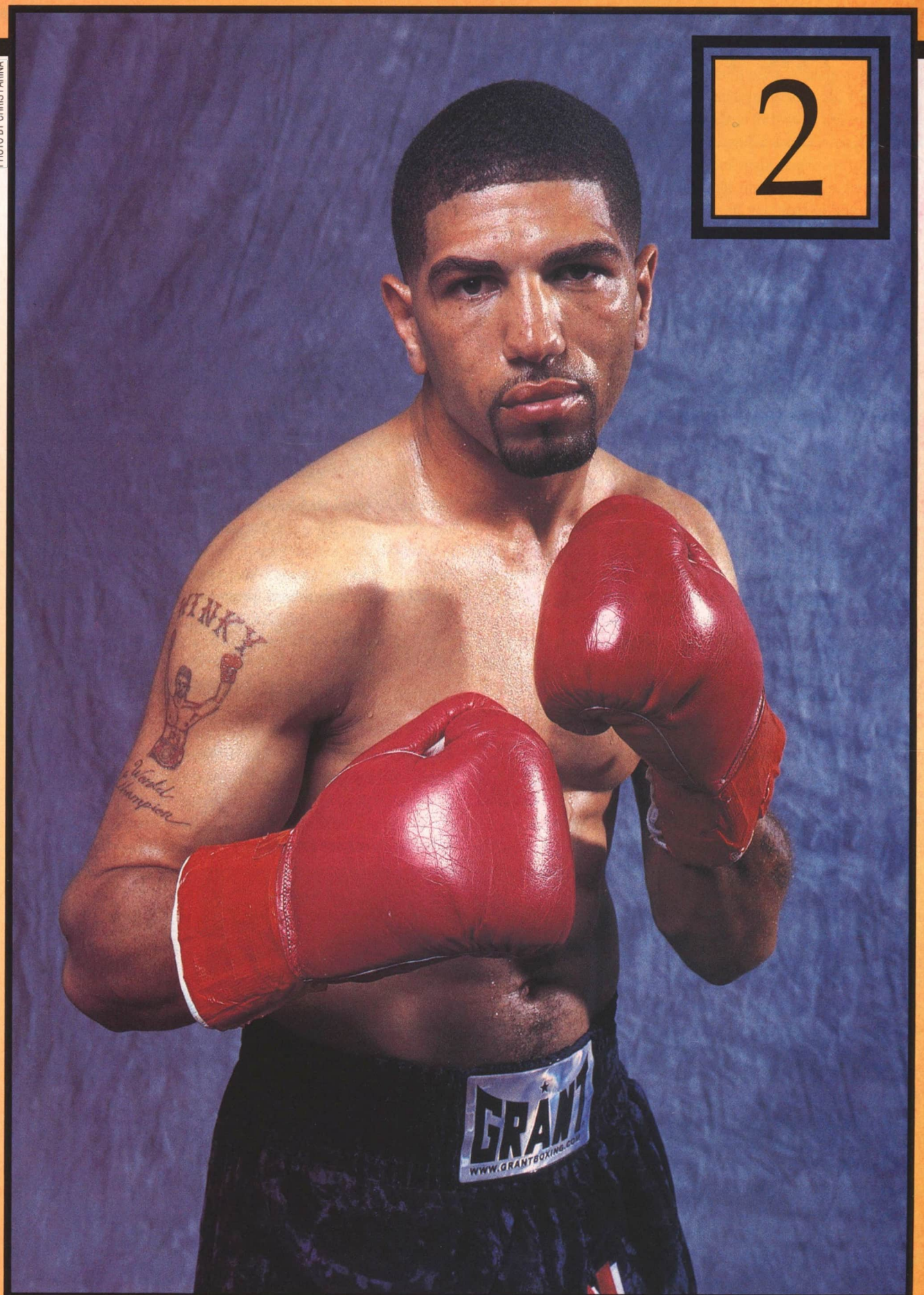

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PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA
WINKY
World Champion
GRANT
WWW.GRANTBOXING.COM

Winky Wright

Birthdate: November 26, 1971

Birthplace: Washington, D.C.

Residence: St. Petersburg, Florida

Weight Class: Junior Middleweight/Middleweight

Height: 5'10"

Reach: 72"

Professional Record: 49-3 (25)

World Titles: IBF junior middleweight (October 12, 2001-November 20, 2004), World junior middleweight (March 13, 2004-present)

Handlers: James Prince, manager; Dan Birmingham, trainer

Background: Was born and raised in Washington, D.C, and moved with his family to St. Petersburg, Florida, when he was 16. Walked into Dan Birmingham's gym in St. Petersburg shortly after. Went 65-4 as an amateur, winning the 1990 Olympic Festival Championship, the 1989 National PAL Championship, and the 1988 and 1989 Sunshine State Golden Gloves. Turned pro in 1990 and won 16 straight in Florida, but elicited no interest from major American promoters. Signed deal with Acaries brothers of France. For the next six years fought mostly in Europe, losing only to Julio Vasquez for the WBA junior middleweight title and to Harry Simon in South Africa. Fought Fernando Vargas to a standstill in 1999 IBF title bid, but lost a close decision, and finally secured IBF trinket with win over Robert Frazier in '01.

Style: Busy, aggressive, stand-up boxer

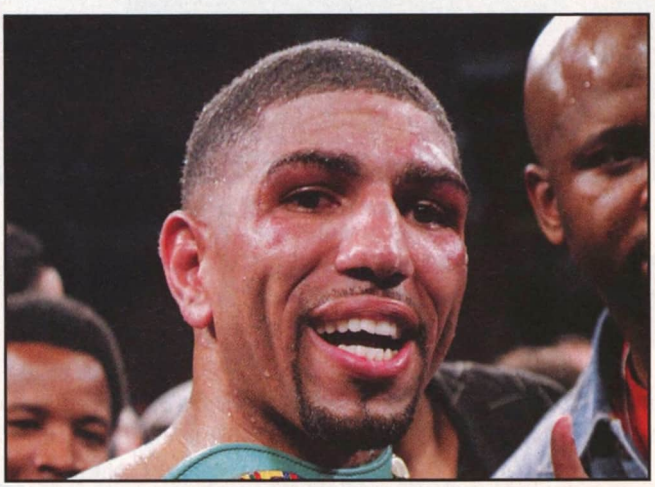
Strengths: Awkward, fast, southpaw style; punishing jab, airtight defense.

Weaknesses: Lack of appreciable punching power, unexciting style

Best Performance: Completely handcuffed and dominated Trinidad in showdown in May '05, shutting him out over 12 one-sided rounds. Some were disappointed he didn't try to take Trinidad out, the way Bernard Hopkins had, but it was masterful exhibition just the same.

Worst Performance: Looked ordinary and uninspired against mediocre Angel Hernandez in November '03, taking many more punches than is customary for him. Still pitched a near shutout, but appeared to be going through the motions.

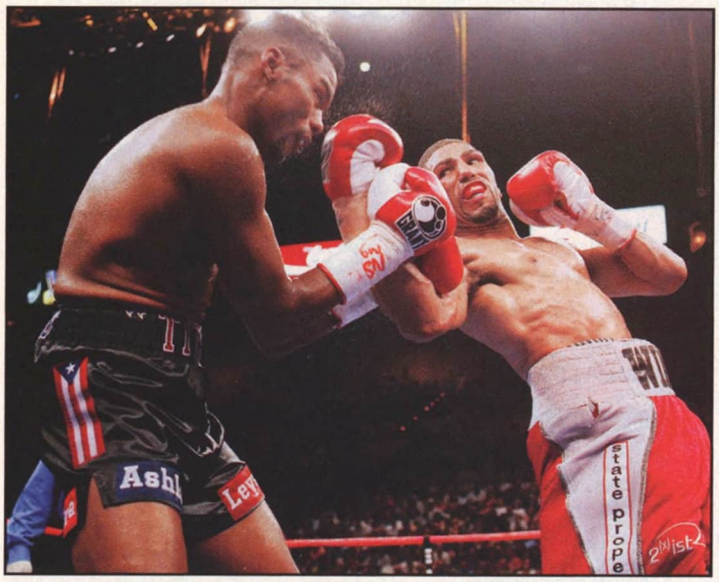
Future: Was willing to satisfy rematch clause that was in the contract for Trinidad fight, but Trinidad re-retired. Hoping for big-money match against Oscar De La Hoya or winner of Bernard Hopkins-Jermain Taylor. Other less attractive options are fights with top-rated junior middle Kassim Ouma or comebacking Ike Quartey.



Report Card

Boxing Ability	A+
Power	C+
Defense	A+
Ring Generalship	A+
Experience	A
Quality of Opposition	B-
Chin	A
Stamina	B-
Overall Grade	B+

Winky Wright's 10 Greatest Fights



Wright nails Trinidad with an uppercut

1 W 12 Felix Trinidad, May 14, 2005, Las Vegas, Nevada

This was supposed to be two things: a celebration of the ongoing magic of Trinidad and the next step toward Trinidad getting a rematch with Bernard Hopkins. That's what brought more than 17,000 fans to Madison Square Garden for Trinidad's comeback win over Ricardo Mayorga. "Tito" and his huge Puerto Rican fan base was hopeful Wright would prove as willing a target.

Talk about a killjoy. It's hard to find two fighters less alike than Mayorga and Wright, a fact Trinidad discovered right away. The first round wasn't two minutes old when he'd eaten several thumping southpaw jabs. And that's the way it went all night; Trinidad ate Wright's jabs and got very little business done in return, losing every round. The scores of 120-107 and 119-108 (twice) told the story. "I think he underestimated me a little bit. He didn't think I was that strong," Wright said. Or that good.

2 W 12 Shane Mosley, March 13, 2004, Las Vegas, Nevada

Part of being good is being lucky sometimes, and Wright was good and lucky when Mosley turned down a third fight with Oscar De La Hoya—over money, naturally—and agreed to take on Wright. It made no sense financially for Mosley because he would get even less for Wright than he'd have gotten for De La Hoya, but hey, when you get a break like that, you don't question it, and Wright didn't.

It couldn't have been long before Mosley did. The 3-1 favorite found out early that Wright's southpaw jab, his defense, and his straight left presented problems for him that De La Hoya never could. Wright erased Mosley's speed, pounded him with straight lefts, and out-muscled him. Mosley never gave up, but by the end every one of the 9,000 in attendance at the Mandalay Bay knew Wright had won the world junior middleweight title. The scores of 116-112 and 117-111 (twice) were merely confirmation.

3 W 12 Shane Mosley, November 20, 2004, Las Vegas, Nevada

Mosley did about everything he could to win the rematch. He changed his diet. He ejected his father, Jack, from his corner and his training camp and replaced him with Joe Goossen. And he took Wright more seriously; after all, he couldn't sneak up on anyone anymore. If he couldn't beat Wright this time around, he never would. Thank goodness for rematch clauses. The problem for Mosley was that he couldn't change Wright.

Still pounding away with straight lefts, still out-jabbing Mosley in the center of the ring, and still naturally bigger and stronger, Wright again controlled Mosley. It was closer than last time, as Mosley's punch output was greater, especially to Wright's body, but Wright was just better at everything. Except for a moment in the fifth when Wright got crazy and allowed

Mosley changed everything for the Winky rematch—except the outcome

A right to the temple leaves Sugar Shane weak-kneed

Mosley to connect with a pair of right hands, Wright was in charge throughout, even if the scores of 114-114 and 115-113 (twice) didn't entirely reflect it.

4 L 12 Fernando Vargas, December 4, 1999, Lincoln City, Oregon

This was supposed to be an easy win for Vargas, a tune-up for a big-money fight with Ike Quartey. On the surface, Wright, known for being a slick, light-hitting counterpuncher, seemed a safe choice. But the guy who showed up trying to win the IBF junior middleweight title wasn't the jabber and mover he was advertised to be.

Wright took it to Vargas from the opening bell, going right to him and punching with both hands. He scored well and early and the exchanges were violent and mostly even. Vargas was on a 17-fight knockout streak, so it surprised most when he never fazed Wright. Wright punched back harder when he was nailed, but faded noticeably over the final three rounds. That was when Vargas won it, digging deep to pull it out by scores of 115-113, 116-112, and 114-114. "I dominated that fight," Wright protested afterward. "I was coming forward, blocking his punches, and catching him with clean shots." Many agreed.

5 W 12 Bronco McKart, September 9, 2000, Chester, West Virginia

You didn't want to be Wright's opponent directly after the Vargas fight. You had to figure he had a lot to prove. But McKart was ready. He'd lost just twice in 44 fights (once to Wright, and that was a split decision) and wasn't going to pass up this chance at the USBA and NABF junior middleweight belts. It was also an eliminator for the IBF belt. There was too much to gain if he won.

McKart would have done just as well to skip it and try to get a title shot another way. Wright was at his confounding best, sticking that jab in McKart's face and outworking him from bell to bell. He put his gloves up around his ears, and McKart couldn't land a thing. We'd like to say the Mountaineer Racetrack was the perfect setting because Wright ran circles around him, but he didn't. He stood there and outfought McKart and outsmarted him and won going away by tallies of 116-112 and 118-110 (twice).

6 W 12 Keith Mullings, December 16, 2000, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

The best fighters fight through all kinds of injuries and crises, and Wright had to here, though it wasn't clear until the last minute that he was going to. A week before the fight he pulled out, citing an injured left hand. A day later he changed his mind, deciding apparently that he didn't need two good hands to beat Mullings, the former WBC junior middleweight beltholder who'd lost two in a row coming in. Turned out he was right.

Standing right in front of Mullings, Wright hammered away with the right jab, and that was all it took. According to ComupBox, Wright landed a total of 128 jabs by the end, compared to four—yes, four—for Mullings. He hurt Mullings in the fourth with a right, but never threatened to stop him. "The left was already sore, but I kept using it," Wright said afterward. "I think I broke my middle knuckle. I took the fight with a hurt hand to show what I could do."

7 W 12 Robert Frazier, October 12, 2001, Indio, California

It took Wright a long time and two unsuccessful tries to claim a junior middleweight title, but you knew going into this one that this was going to be it. He was light years better than Frazier, not to mention infinitely more qualified to be fighting for a title, even the alphabet variety. These were fighters on two different levels.

The difference between the two was clear from the opening bell, even if you were in a coma and didn't know it before. Wright

pushed Frazier back from the start with a persistent right jab, and snaked in long lefts when he wanted to. Totally outgunned, Frazier resorted to clowning, but the fans in attendance at the Fantasy Springs Casino didn't care for it and neither did the judges. They scored it 120-107 and 119-108 (twice), and one suspects that if they had been permitted to give it to Wright by scores even more lopsided, they would have.

8 KO 5 Jason Papillion, February 2, 2002, Miami, Florida

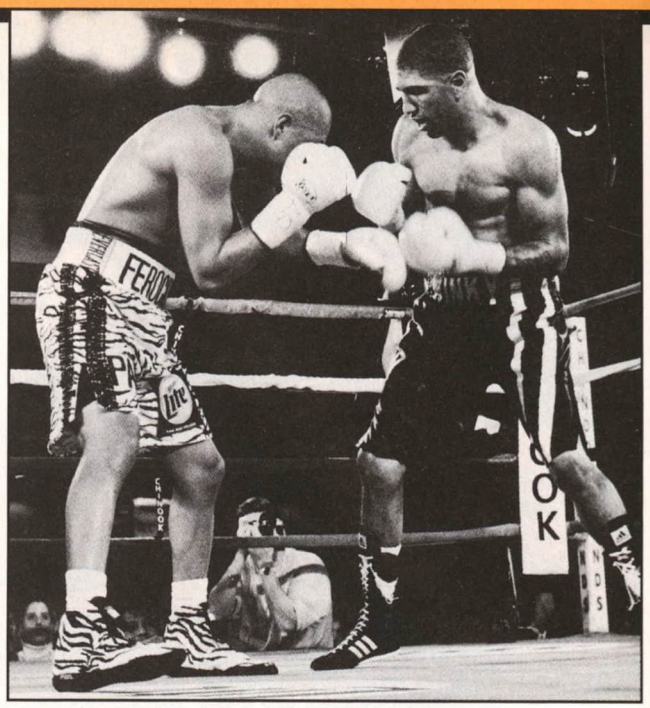
Even the best of them take easy first title defenses and Wright was no different. Papillion, though nothing terrible at 34-6-1 (22), was no world-beater. He'd lost to Paul Vaden, Bronco McKart (twice), Howard Clarke, and Santiago Samaniego. And he had a lot of wins against guys you never heard of. But that's okay. Everyone gets a gimme once in a while. What matters is what you do with it. Wright handled his the way it should have been handled. He took Papillion apart.

Wright dominated from the start, wobbling Papillion in the first round and cutting him over the right eye in the second. He tortured Papillion to the body and rocked him again in the fifth, resulting in a rare stoppage, at 2:44 of the round. "I was shocked I took him out so early," Wright said. "To people who say I don't hit hard, just keep watching. The more money I make, the harder I hit."

9 W DQ 8 Bronco McKart, September 7, 2002, Portland, Oregon

McKart never had a reputation as a particularly dirty fighter. There are no losses by disqualification on his record, other than this one. And he's not an unstable guy, so far as we know. So how does he get disqualified in his third fight with Wright? He snaps. He can't take it anymore. And you can't blame him. Asking anyone to fight Wright three times must qualify as cruel and unusual punishment.

McKart took desperate measures to end his third fight with Wright



Vargas' majority decision over Winky was hotly disputed

McKart will deny it, but what other explanation can there be? The low blows started early on and just kept coming. By the end he'd had five points deducted and he just kept throwing them. Wright did what he always did: kept his jab in McKart's face, raked his body, and made it impossible for McKart to hit him anywhere over the beltline. It was almost fun, watching McKart unravel mentally, right in front of us, and not complain a bit when he got tossed. He actually looked happy about it. Wright will do that to you.

10 W 12 Andrew Council, March 5, 1996, Norfolk, Virginia

How far back was this? Pre-Harry Simon. That's back. Way back. Back when Wright was still fighting mostly in Europe. But he came to Norfolk, Virginia, to face Council, who'd become something of a hot commodity, having beaten Buddy McGirt six months earlier. He'd drawn with Tony Marshall too, so you knew he could fight a bit, but what he was learning in the States was apparently not the same kind of stuff Wright was learning overseas.

Bigger and stronger, Council was the aggressor throughout, but Wright has always liked it when guys came to him. He let Council walk forward and right into that right jab (what else?) and when he came in close, Wright stepped to the side and pelted him with right hooks. Council was energetic, but that doesn't mean much against a guy who can box like Wright. The judges didn't think so either, and Wright went back to Europe for a little while longer with a unanimous decision win by scores of 118-109, 116-111, and 116-112.

The Professional Record of Winky Wright

1990		
Oct. 16	Anthony Salerno, Tampa, FL	W 4
Nov. 28	Christopher Conrad, Tampa	KO 1
Dec. 14	Tony Graham, Hollywood, FL	KO 2
1991		
Jan. 25	Stedroy Bolus, Hollywood	KO 3
March 29	Glenn Major, Tampa	KO 4
July 26	Lorenzo Bouie, Tampa	W 6
Aug. 13	Rocky Fabrizzio, Tampa	W 6
Aug. 30	Edison Martinez, Orlando, FL	KO 1
Sept. 17	Jeff Johnson, Orlando	W 6
Oct. 18	Glenn Major, Tampa	KO 2
Nov. 15	Gary McCall, Tampa	KO 1
Dec. 13	Lennell Strohman, Tampa	W 6
1992		
Feb. 28	Persephone Van Reenen, Tampa	KO 3
March 27	Mike Howard, Tampa	KO 4
May 28	Delfino Marin, Tampa	KO 1
July 30	Carlos Santana, Tampa	KO 2
1993		
Jan. 2	Darryl Lattimore, Differdange, Lux.	KO 1
Jan. 31	Roland Commings, Levallois, France	W 8
March 20	Eric Holland, Dusseldorf, Germany	W 8
May 28	James Stokes, Punta Gorda, FL	KO 1
Aug. 21	Leon Rouse, Monte Carlo, Monaco	KO 1
Oct. 16	Gilberto Barreto, Levallois	KO 2
Dec. 4	Tony McCrimmion, Levallois	KO 5
1994		
March 19	Armando Herrera, Paris	KO 1
June 4	Orlando Orozco, Levallois	KO 1
Aug. 21	Julio Vasquez, St. Jean De Luz, France (For WBA Junior Middleweight Title)	L 12
Nov. 11	Ernesto Sena, Tucuman, Argentina	KO 3
1995		
Feb. 4	Tony Marshall, Castelnau Le Lez, France	W 12
April 1	Anthony Ivory, Levallois	W 8
April 11	Leon Cessiron, Levallois	W 10
July 25	Larry La Coursiere, St. Jean De Luz	KO 1
Aug. 25	Anthony Ivory, Cannet, France	W 12
Oct. 23	Young Dick Tiger, Inglewood, CA	KO 9
1996		
Jan. 6	Jean D'Alessandro, Levallois	W 8
March 5	Andrew Council, Norfolk, VA	W 12
May 17	Bronco McKart, Monroe, MI	W 12
Nov. 9	Ensley Bingham, Manchester, England	W 12
1997		
May 3	Steve Foster, Manchester	KO 6
Dec. 19	Adrian Dodson, London	KO 6
1998		
Aug. 22	Harry Simon, Hammanskraal, S. Africa	L 12
1999		
March 27	Derrick Graham, Miami	KO 3
Dec. 4	Fernando Vargas, Lincoln City, OR (For IBF Junior Middleweight Title)	L 12
2000		
Sept. 9	Bronco McKart, Chester, WV	W 12
Dec. 16	Keith Mullings, Pittsburgh	W 12
2001		
Oct. 12	Robert Frazier, Indio, CA (Wins Vacant IBF Junior Middleweight Title)	W 12
2002		
Feb. 2	Jason Papillion, Miami (Retains IBF Junior Middleweight Title)	KO 5
Sept. 7	Bronco McKart, Portland, OR (Retains IBF Junior Middleweight Title)	W Disq. 8
2003		
March 1	J.C. Candelo, Las Vegas (Retains IBF Junior Middleweight Title)	W 12
Nov. 8	Angel Hernandez, Las Vegas (Retains IBF Junior Middleweight Title)	W 12
2004		
March 13	Shane Mosley, Las Vegas (Wins World Junior Middleweight Title)	W 12
Nov. 20	Shane Mosley, Las Vegas (Retains World Junior Middleweight Title)	W 12
2005		
May 14	Felix Trinidad, Las Vegas	W 12

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Wright wins unanimously over Candelo, his third defense

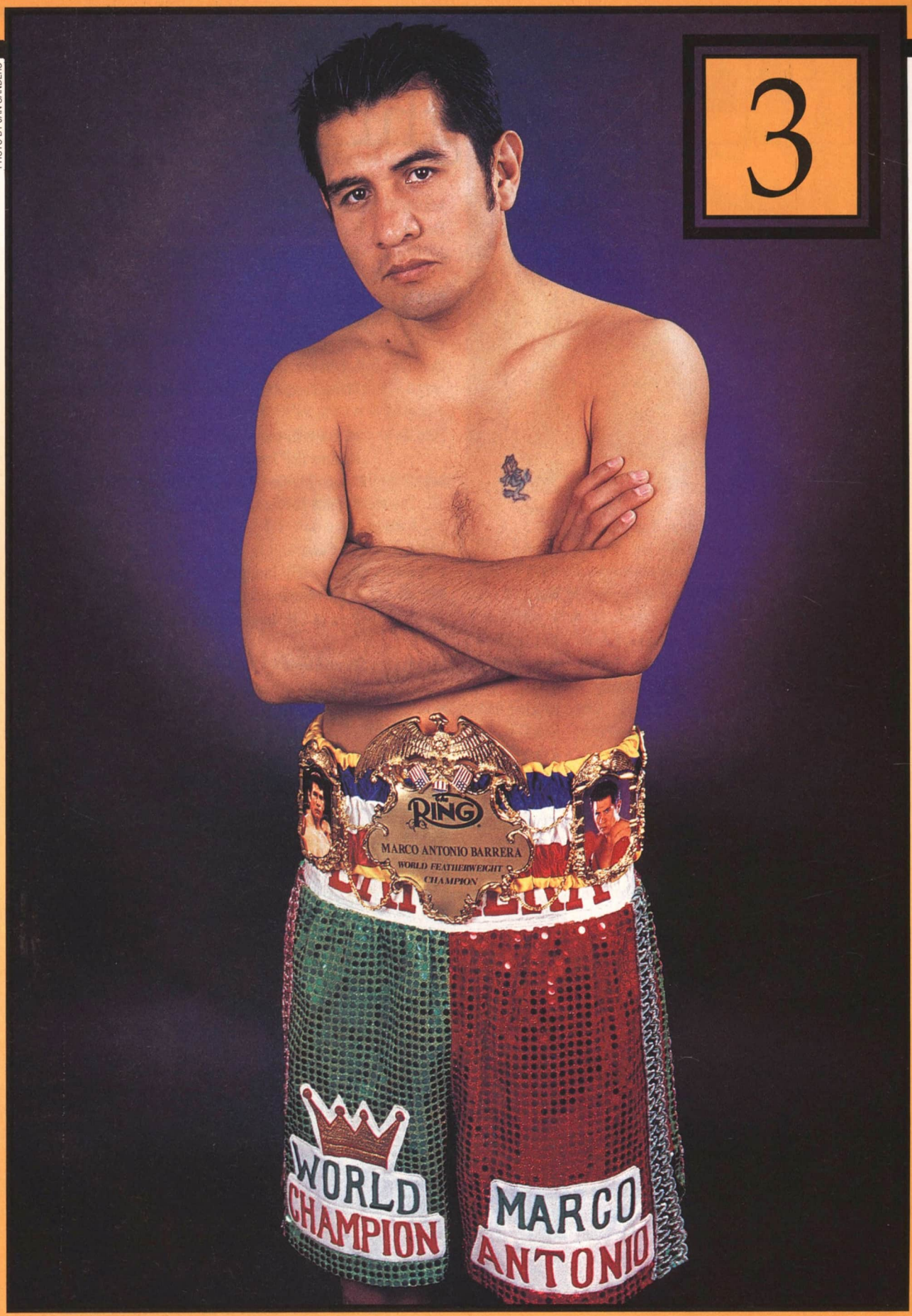

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PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS
THE RING
MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA
WORLD FEATHERWEIGHT
CHAMPION
WORLD
CHAMPION
MARCO
ANTONIO

Marco Antonio Barrera

Birthdate: January 17, 1974

Birthplace: Mexico City, Mexico

Residence: Iztacalco, Mexico

Weight Class: Junior Lightweight

Height: 5'6"

Reach: 70"

Professional Record: 60-4 (42) with 1 no-contest

World Titles: World featherweight (June 22, 2002-November 15, 2003), WBC super featherweight (November 27, 2004-present)

Handlers: Rudy Perez, manager and trainer

Background: Born into well-to-do professional family in upscale neighborhood in Mexico City. Went 56-4 as an amateur and won five Mexican National Amateur Championships. Turned pro in 1989 at the age of 15 and won 43 straight before dropping two fights in a row to Junior Jones. Rebounded in 2000 with good showing against Erik Morales in their first fight, then upset Naseem Hamed. Was viewed as almost unbeatable before Manny Pacquiao stopped him in '03, and has rebounded again with impressive wins over Paulie Ayala and Morales in their rubber match. On his way to making mark among the all-time great Mexican fighters.

Style: Switches seamlessly between patient boxer and aggressive powerpuncher

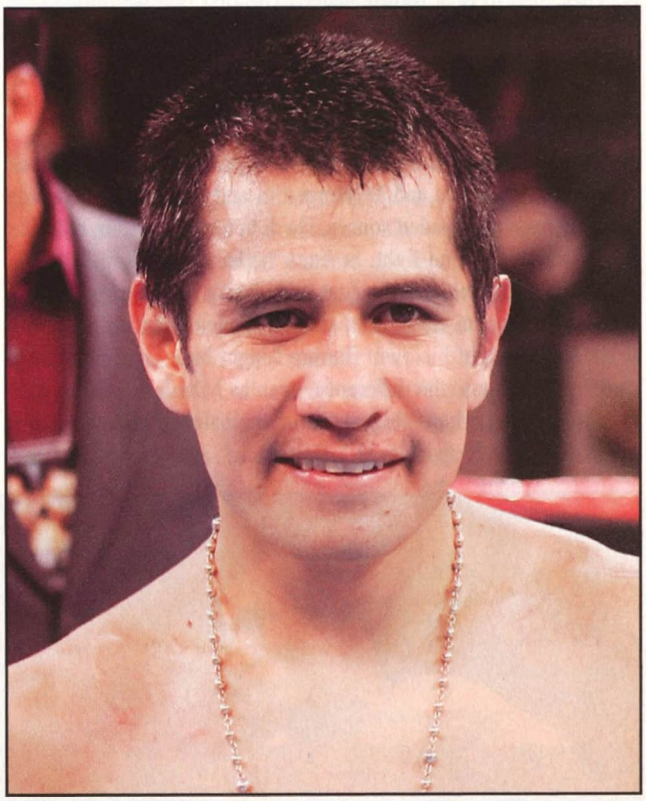
Strengths: Versatility, bodypunching, stamina, jab, patience

Weakness: Wear and tear of 16 years as a pro

Best Performance: Was magnificent in February '96, 12th-round stoppage of power-punching Kennedy McKinney in one of the best fights of the year.

Worst Performance: Was completely outfought and overwhelmed by Pacquiao in November '03, 11th-round kayo loss. At one point late in fight appeared to be trying to draw disqualification.

Future: Mandatory alphabet defense against Robbie Peden, and after that maybe a fight against one of his fellow former featherweight brethren: Pacquiao, Morales, or even Juan Manuel Marquez.



Report Card

Boxing Ability	A-
Power	A-
Defense	C+
Ring Generalship	A-
Experience	A+
Quality of Opposition	A+
Chin	A
Stamina	A
Overall Grade	B+

Marco Antonio Barrera's 10 Greatest Fights

1 W 12 Erik Morales, November 27, 2004, Las Vegas, Nevada

There had to be a rubber match. The first two were too close for it to be any other way, so Barrera and his arch-nemesis had to do what Ali and Frazier had done, what Bowe and Holyfield had done, what Gatti and Ward had done. It was only natural. They had to do it.

The first half of the fight belonged to Barrera outright. He was quicker than Morales and he jumped in and out with right hands and uppercuts that landed square. He didn't try to outbox him like he had in their second fight; he knew he had to back up Morales, and in doing that he won the first half clearly. But starting around the seventh Barrera slowed down and Morales woke up, dropping in straight rights of his own. Barrera fought back and his cleaner, harder punches told the difference, even as Morales took the final rounds. It was perhaps the easiest of their three fights to score: 114-114, 115-113, and 115-114, Barrera.

2 KO 12 Kennedy McKinney, February 3, 1996, Inglewood, California

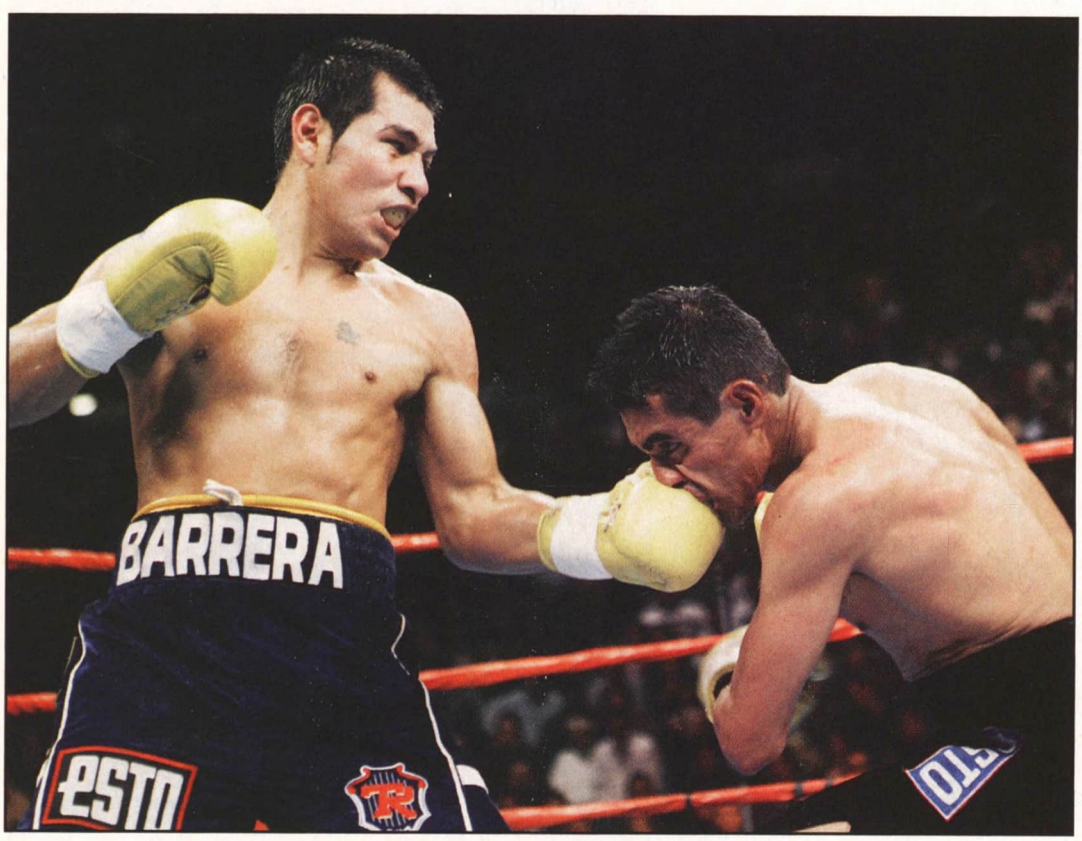
HBO's *Boxing After Dark* series strove to pit lesser known but high-quality fighters against one another, and chose this as their inaugural main event. It seemed a good move; Barrera was undefeated and a terror at junior feather, a miniature Julio Cesar Chavez. McKinney was a former IBF 122-pound titlist who'd made five title defenses, and a deadly right-hand puncher. Neither HBO nor the nearly 8,000 fans at the Great Western Forum knew what they were in for.

From the outset Barrera was the better, stronger, harder-hitting fighter. He pounded McKinney's body and rocked him with rights upstairs. But McKinney never stopped firing back. Even after Barrera floored him in the seventh and ninth rounds, McKinney came back to score a flash knockdown in the 10th. But Barrera was too much. He dropped McKinney with a bodyshot in the 12th and then again with a right to the jaw, prompting referee Pat Russell to stop it.

3 L 12 Erik Morales, February 19, 2000, Las Vegas, Nevada

You can call it a loss because that's what it says in the record books, but in every other way this was a win for Barrera. Not because he was robbed; it was close enough to have gone either way. But because Barrera wasn't supposed to do what he did to Morales (it was post-Junior Jones) and because the perception that he was robbed made him sympathetic. Plus, it was a hell of a good fight.

Barrera barreled forward from the start, drilling Morales with hooks and straight right hands. He backed Morales to the ropes and strafed him with powershots, and even if Morales never quite landed with the same effect that Barrera did, he did damage too, raking Barrera with right crosses and his own hooks to the body.



Barrera gives Morales a mouthful

Barrera hands Hamed his first defeat

It was thrilling throughout. Barrera got credit for a knockdown that wasn't in the 12th, but it didn't matter. The judges saw it 114-113, 113-114, and 115-112 for Morales in THE RING's Fight of the Year.

4 W 12 Naseem Hamed, April 7, 2001, Las Vegas, Nevada

Here's the way it was supposed to work out: Barrera, moving up from junior featherweight and maybe not the guy he used to be, would charge Hamed, firing hooks and brawling—because that's the way he fought. Hamed would catch him with a couple of looping haymakers and knock him out. That's the way it would go. It was simple.

That's not the way it went. Barrera boxed. He jabbed. He landed short, straight right hands and stayed outside, and Hamed, looking very little like a professional boxer in comparison, couldn't get anything done. He needed Barrera to lose it a little if he was to land, and Barrera knew it. So Barrera fought a smart, disciplined fight, except for a moment in the 12th when he spun Hamed around and introduced his face to the ringpost. That transgression cost Barrera a point, but he could easily afford it. The scores were 116-111 and 115-112 (twice).

5 KO 10 Paulie Ayala, June 19, 2004, Carson, California

What did Barrera have left? After his kayo loss to Manny Pacquiao, after all those fights and all those wars, was he done? He'd been at this for a long while. What was left? This fight was supposed to tell us. Yes, Ayala was moving up from junior feather. And yes, most of us expected Barrera to win. But *how* was the important question.

Turned out Barrera had plenty left. Early on he boxed, using Ayala's aggression against him. When he wanted to, he let Ayala run into the jab. When he wanted to land the hook, he let Ayala past the jab and banged the hook home. Ayala was game but completely outclassed. Barrera dropped him twice in the eighth round with scorching combinations, and ended it in the 10th with a brutal combination, topped off by a hook to the liver. "I feel very good, very comfortable," Barrera said "It shows that I'm back and what happened in November (against Pacquiao) was a bad night."

6 W 12 Erik Morales, June 22, 2002, Las Vegas, Nevada

Going into their second fight, Barrera had won five straight, including a huge win over Naseem Hamed. Morales was coming off back-to-back struggles against Guty Espadas Jr. and Injin Chi. And we all remembered the first fight. So you had to favor Barrera in this fight for the vacant world featherweight title, assuming he planned to fight the way he had the first time. He didn't.

"The plan coming in was to outbox him because he would grab me when I would rush him," Barrera said later. He stuck with that plan over the first half of the fight and it almost cost him dearly. Surprised by his good fortune, Morales drilled Barrera from the outside throughout the early rounds. It wasn't until the latter half that Barrera changed tactics and battered Morales, nearly closing his right eye. The decision for Barrera, by scores of 116-112 and 115-113 (twice), was seen by many as payback for the decision in the first fight. It easily could have gone the other way.

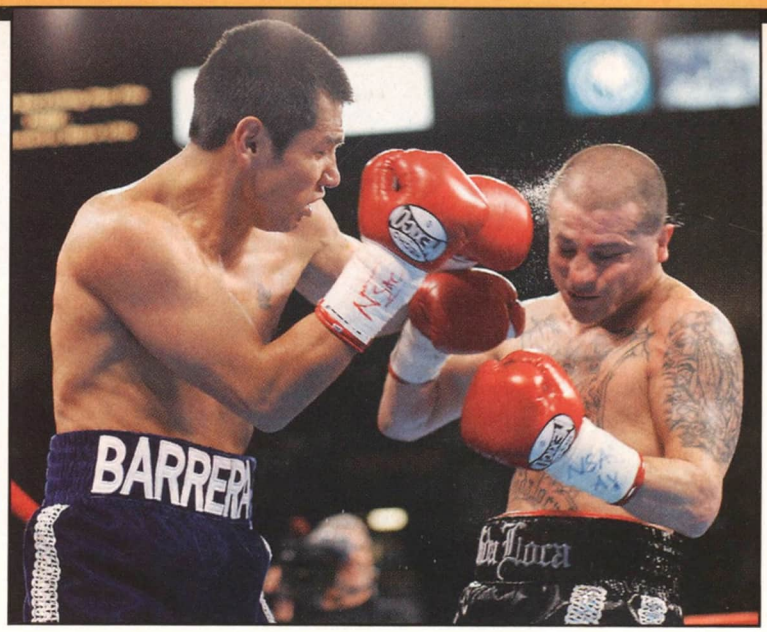
7 W 12 Johnny Tapia, November 2, 2002, Las Vegas, Nevada

All the great fighters carry opponents they respect, and although Barrera would never admit it, many believe he carried Tapia. You could understand why; Tapia was older, past his best

Ayala takes a left hook to the body

days, above his best weight, and the most sympathetic character in a sport full of sympathetic characters. Barrera would gain nothing by chopping him up and knocking him out early. He came close a couple times, but eased back.

"My corner told me to go out there and jab and control the fight," he said. "We didn't want any accidents to happen, so that's what I did." So complete was Barrera's dominance that, for all his gentility, he had Tapia's face at the end looking like it had been shoved into a wood chipper. The scores were equally as revealing: 116-112 and 118-110 (twice), all for Barrera, who tamed Tapia with little more than a jab that landed like a sack of rocks, followed occasionally by a whistling right hand.



Tapia absorbs a Barrera hook

8 KO 3 Jesse Benavides, May 4, 1996, Anaheim, California

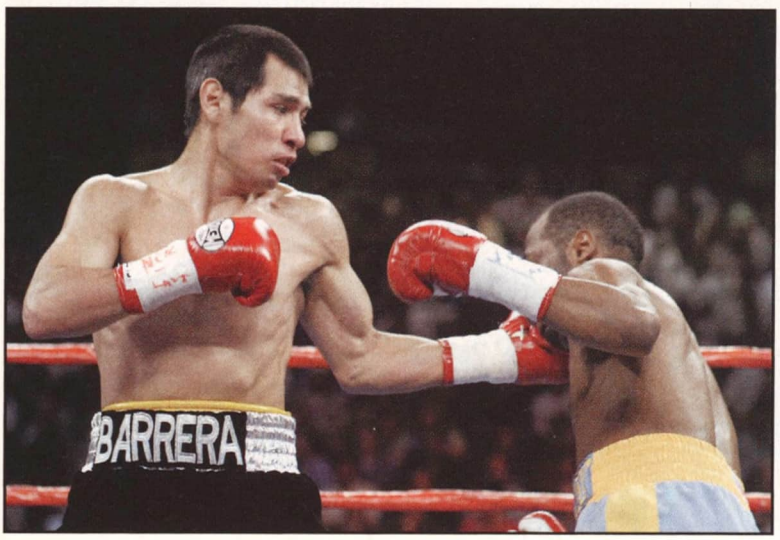
It's true that much of the bloom had already been knocked off of Benavides, an accomplished amateur and once upon a time a highly touted prospect. Before Barrera got to him, he'd lost decisions to Duke McKenzie and Tracy Harris Patterson in consecutive fights, and then later dropped a decision to featherweight champ Kevin Kelley. But he put together some wins after that, and with Emanuel Steward in his corner, dropped back down to junior feather and took on the undefeated Barrera in Arrowhead Pond Arena.

Talk about a disastrous career move. Barrera was much too strong. He had no problem reaching the squat Benavides and he hurt him every time he touched him. Barrera won the first two rounds easily and when the pounding continued in the third, it was stopped, the first and only time Benavides was stopped in his career. He never fought again.

9 KO 4 Kevin Kelley, April 12, 2003, Las Vegas, Nevada

One of your obligations as a future Hall of Hame fighter is to quickly and easily disposes of older fighters who were champions before you. If you struggle in these contests, there are going to be valid questions about your worth. Kelley, at 35 years old and without a significant victory in years, didn't belong in the ring with Barrera. Everyone in the MGM Grand Arena knew it, or should have. If they didn't, Barrera would show them.

Midway through the first round, Barrera dropped a right counter over Kelley's left and followed it with a hook and down went the challenger. By the second, Kelley's eyes began to swell from the effect of Barrera's face-numbing left jabs. A pair of bodyshots followed by a right floored Kelley in the fourth and another volley sent him down again. A final barrage while Kelley was trapped in a corner brought about the stoppage. Barrera had barely been touched.



Kelley was in over his head

10 KO 8 Eddie Cook, December 3, 1994, Las Vegas, Nevada

This was prime Barrera, before Junior Jones, before the wars with Morales, before Pacquiao, before he knew he could move and jab and he wouldn't get run out of the arena for it. If you shrunk Julio Cesar Chavez down to 122 and made him a little cruder but angrier, you had Barrera, circa 1994.

Cook? Not a bad little fighter. Doing business out of Las Vegas and trained by the venerable Kenny Adams, he'd been stopped in an upset by Dadoy Andujar and lost a close decision down in Colombia to Jorge Eliecer Julio for the WBA bantamweight title. But he'd won 19 others with 16 stops. Decent credentials right? Sure he might give Barrera a run for his money. Wrong. Barrera got that hook cranking inside the ring at Caesars Palace, and Cook was doomed. He hung in there for a while on guts, but Barrera just overpowered him and beat him down, stopping him in the eighth. Cook retired without fighting again.

The Professional Record of Marco Antonio Barrera

1989		
Nov. 22	David Felix, Mexico City	KO 2
Dec. 16	Federico Lara, Mexico City	KO 3
1990		
May 18	Ignacio Jacome, Salamanca, Mexico	W 4
June 9	Oscar Granados, Mexico City	W 4
Aug. 4	Federico Lara, Mexico City	KO 3
Sept. 14	Sebastian Amica, Acapulco, Mexico	KO 5
Oct. 6	Pedro Martinez, Mexico City	KO 2
Oct. 13	Jose Yanez, Mexico City	KO 2
Dec. 8	Ivan Salazar, Mexico City	W 8
1991		
Feb. 9	Esteban Rodriguez, Mexico City	KO 4
March 9	Abel Hinojosa, Mexico City	KO 5
April 13	Juan Lopez, Mexico City	KO 1
June 29	Jaime Rojas, Mexico City	KO 6
Aug. 31	Antonio Aguilar, Mexico City	KO 1
Nov. 2	Javier Diaz, Mexico City	W Disq. 7
Dec. 7	Miguel Pina, Mexico City	KO 1
1992		
April 1	Josefino Suarez, Mexico City	W 12
June 13	Jose Montiel, Mexico City	KO 2
July 11	Miguel Espinoza, Mexico City	KO 6
Oct. 2	Abner Barajas, Guadalajara, Mexico	W 10
Nov. 9	Esteban Ayala, Inglewood, CA	KO 4
Dec. 5	Angel Rosario, Mexico City	KO 6
1993		
March 1	Ivan Salazar, Inglewood	W 10
April 10	Facundo Rodriguez, Guadalajara	KO 4
May 22	Noe Santillana, Naucalpan, Mexico	W 12
July 12	Elidio Dominguez, Inglewood	KO 1
Aug. 28	Eduardo Ramirez, Inglewood	W 12
Nov. 27	Alex Sanabria, Mexico City	KO 1
1994		
March 1	Justo Zuniga, Inglewood	KO 3
April 13	Carlos Salazar, Buenos Aires, Argentina	W 10
June 24	Miguel Espinoza, Inglewood	KO 6
Aug. 15	Israel Gonzalez, Inglewood	KO 8
Oct. 22	Jesus Sarabia, Las Vegas	KO 3
Dec. 3	Eddie Cook, Las Vegas	KO 8
1995		
March 31	Daniel Jimenez, Anaheim, CA	W 12
June 2	Frank Toledo, Ledyard, CT	KO 2
July 15	Mauricio Diaz, Inglewood	KO 1
Aug. 22	Agapito Sanchez, South Padre Island, TX	W 12
Nov. 4	Eddie Croft, Las Vegas	KO 7
1996		
Feb. 3	Kennedy McKinney, Los Angeles	KO 12
May 4	Jesse Benavides, Anaheim	KO 3
July 14	Orlando Fernandez, Denver, CO	KO 7
Sept. 14	Jesse Magana, Los Angeles	KO 10
Nov. 22	Junior Jones, Tampa, FL	L Disq. 5
1997		
April 18	Junior Jones, Las Vegas	L 12
1998		
Feb. 21	Angel Rosario, Las Vegas	KO 5
May 16	Geronimo Cardoz, Las Vegas	KO 1
Sept. 26	Pedro Torres, Lake Tahoe, NV	KO 4
Oct. 31	Richie Wenton, Atlantic City	KO 3
1999		
April 3	Paul Lloyd, London	KO 1
Aug. 7	Pastor Maurin, Atlantic City	W 12
Dec. 18	Cesar Najera, Indio, CA	Exh. 4
2000		
Feb. 19	Erik Morales, Las Vegas (For WBC Super Bantamweight Title)	L 12
June 17	Luiz Freitas, Mexico City	KO 1
Sept. 9	Jose Luis Valbuena, New Orleans	W 12
Dec. 1	Jesus Salud, Las Vegas	KO 6
2001		
April 7	Naseem Hamed, Las Vegas	W 12
Sept. 8	Enrique Sanchez, Reno, NV	KO 6
2002		
June 22	Erik Morales, Las Vegas (Wins Vacant World Featherweight Title)	W 12
Nov. 2	Johnny Tapia, Las Vegas (Retains World Featherweight Title)	W 12
2003		
April 12	Kevin Kelley, Las Vegas (Retains World Featherweight Title)	KO 4
Nov. 15	Manny Pacquiao, San Antonio (Loses World Featherweight Title)	KO by 11
2004		
June 19	Paulie Ayala, Los Angeles	KO 10
Nov. 27	Erik Morales, Las Vegas (Wins WBC Super Featherweight Title)	W 12
2005		
April 9	Mzonke Fana, El Paso, TX (Retains WBC Super Featherweight Title)	KO 2

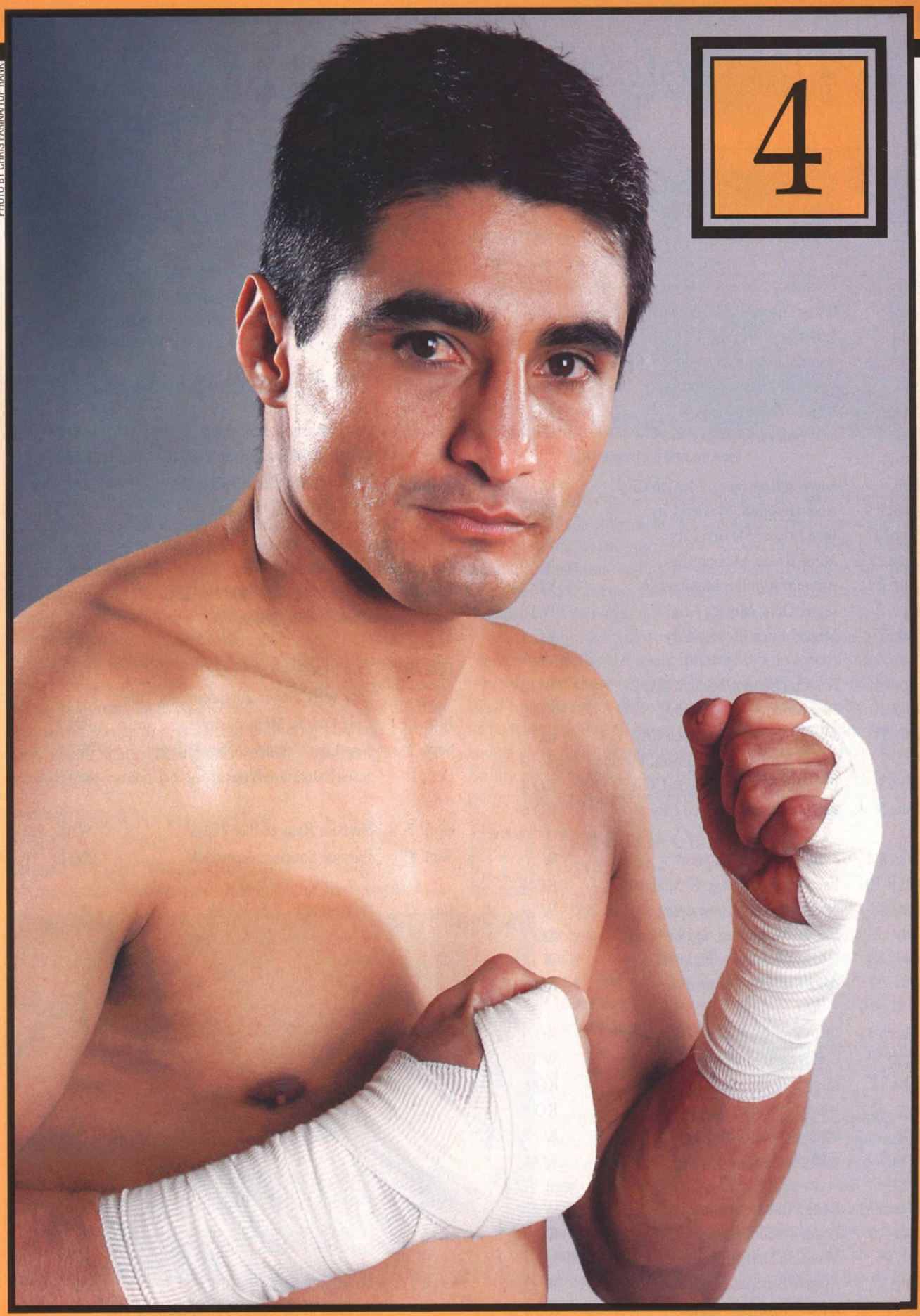


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Erik Morales

Birthdate: September 1, 1976

Birthplace: Tijuana, Mexico

Residence: San Ysidro, California

Weight Class: Junior Lightweight

Height: 5'8"

Reach: 72"

Professional Record: 48-2 (34)

World Titles: WBC super bantamweight (September 6, 1997-September 2, 2000), WBC featherweight (February 17, 2001-June 22, 2002), WBC featherweight (November 16, 2002-October 4, 2003), WBC super featherweight (February 28, 2004-November 27, 2004), IBF super featherweight (July 31, 2004-November 27, 2004)

Handlers: Jose Morales, manager and trainer

Background: Was born and raised in Tijuana, Mexico. Father was a flyweight contender in the 1970s. Started boxing at five years old and went 108-6 as an amateur, winning multiple amateur titles in Mexico. Turned pro at 16 and didn't lose until his 42nd fight, a decision loss to rival Marco Antonio Barrera. Joined Julio Cesar Chavez as the second Mexican fighter to win world titles in three weight classes, and at this writing is 20–2 in title fights. Legacy may be marked by his bitter rivalry with Barrera, but has been a world-class contender for nearly a decade and actively seeks out the toughest fights. Serves as promoter and manager for several fighters including his brother Diego, and is involved in myriad business ventures in Mexico.

Style: Aggressive, stand-up boxer-puncher

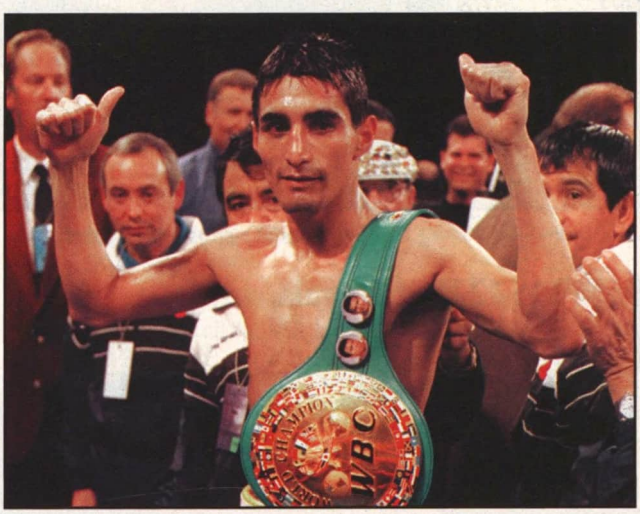
Strengths: Toughness, determination, technique, courage

Weaknesses: Slow hands and feet, inconsistent defense, cuts

Best Performance: Was at his flawless best taking apart skilled and tough Paulie Ayala over the distance to win the vacant WBC featherweight title in November 2002. Showed improved defense and full array of combinations in sizzling performance against top-notch but outgunned opponent.

Worst Performance: As a heavy favorite, was awful against ordinary Guty Espadas in February '01 in WBC featherweight title bout. Struggled throughout and was fortunate to get decision.

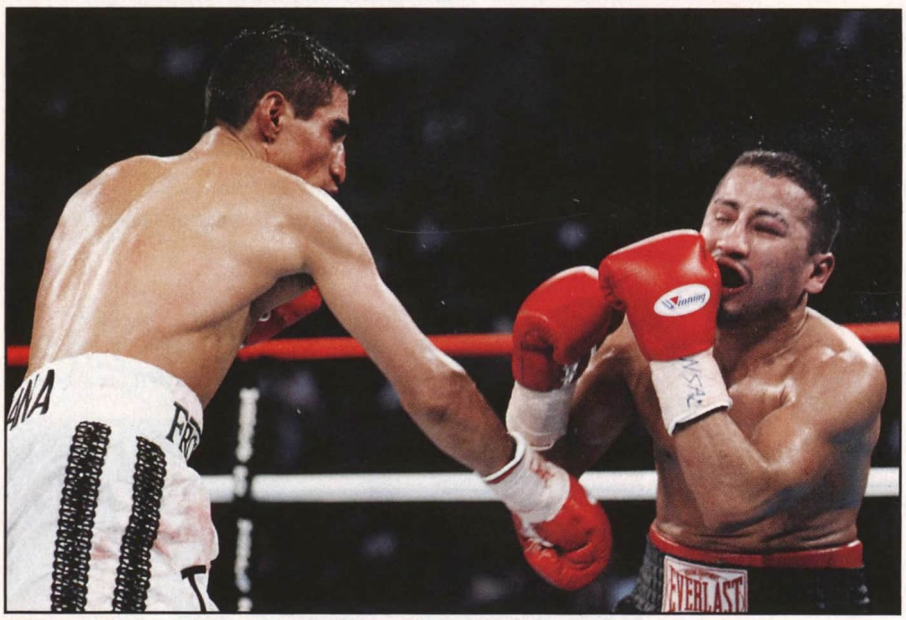
Future: Possible fight with Levander Johnson for the IBF lightweight belt, followed by a rematch with Manny Pacquiao. A fourth fight with Barrera is always a possibility.



Report Card

Boxing Ability	B
Power	B
Defense	C+
Ring Generalship	A
Experience	A+
Quality of Opposition	A+
Chin	A
Stamina	A-
Overall Grade	A-

Erik Morales' 10 Greatest Fights



Morales pierces Ayala's guard

1 W 12 Paulie Ayala, November 16, 2002, Las Vegas, Nevada

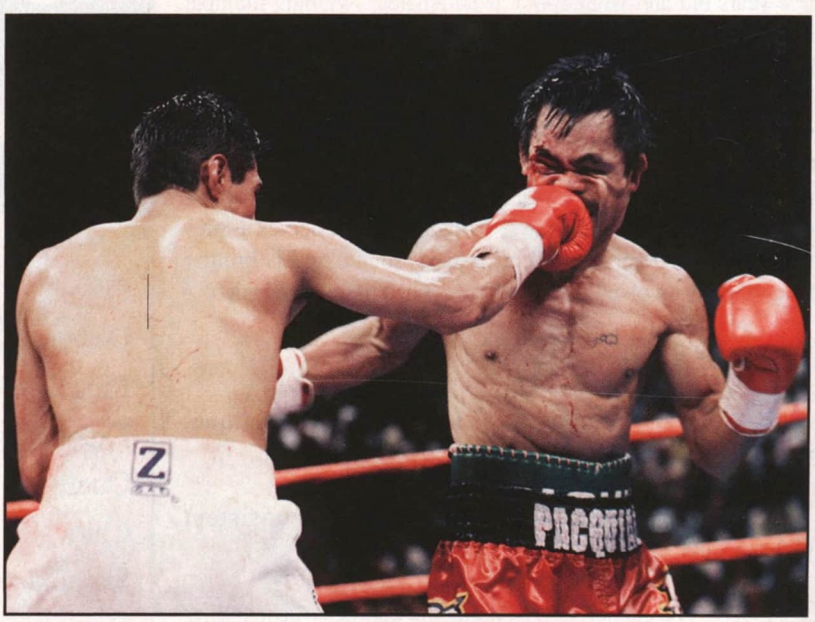
This looked beforehand like fighters going in different directions. Ayala was coming off his solid rematch win over Bones Adams. He'd had trouble with Adams the first time, and with Hugo Dianzo too, but in the Adams rematch seemed at the height of his powers. True, he was moving up to try for the vacant WBC featherweight title. Four pounds. Big deal.

Morales had just lost to Barrera in their rematch. That was after two so-so performances in a row, against Guty Espadas and In-Jin Chi. He looked gaunt. Burnt out. But he wasn't. Boxing better than he had in years, he tortured Ayala from the outset, showing movement, a tight defense, and a dazzling variety of combinations. Midway through, he started banging Ayala with lead right uppercuts and from there Ayala was lucky to finish on his feet. It was masterpiece, and the scores—116-112 and 117-111 (twice)—didn't really reflect how dominant Morales was.

2 W 12 Manny Pacquiao, March 19, 2005, Las Vegas, Nevada

Many of us thought Pacquiao would win this, and not just because Morales had so much trouble with Barrera, while Pacquiao had walked through him. We know styles make fights. It just seemed that Pacquiao was still fresh, while Morales had been through the ringer, especially lately. Barrera, Chavez, Hernandez: all hard fights. That has to catch up with a fighter, right?

Maybe, but not here in the MGM Grand in front of almost 15,000 fans. Showing the same steel-faced resolve as always, Morales handled Pacquiao from the start, fighting with a familiar arrogance that said Pacquiao didn't belong in the ring with him. It wasn't, as Freddie Roach claimed (straight-faced) that Pacquiao had on the wrong gloves. Morales was just better. He tagged Pacquiao all night with long counter rights, split open his eye, and held up under Pacquiao's famed firepower, although he seemed hurt in the final round when Pac-Man launched a furious rally. It was a hard and reasonably close fight as the scorecards—three times 115-113—accurately reflected, but there was no question who won it.



Pacquiao smells Morales' leather

3 L 12 Marco Antonio Barrera, November 27, 2004, Las Vegas, Nevada

This was arguably the best of Morales' performances against Barrera—better than the one he "won," because many thought Barrera deserved it, and better than the rematch, even though many thought he'd done enough to win that one—his early lead was built partly on poor strategy by Barrera and his camp. Once Barrera started fighting aggressively, he quickly closed the gap Morales had built over the first half of the fight.

Barrera owned the first half of the rubber match. His hand speed and hooks were too much for Morales, but in the seventh and eighth, Morales came alive, rocking Barrera with straight rights and hooks of his own. Barrera hurt Morales in the ninth, but Morales owned the championship rounds; Barrera was exhausted and Morales beat him to the punch repeatedly. The 11,000-plus fans at the MGM Grand Arena spent the last three minutes on their feet, and Morales' late rally fell just short; the scores were 114-114, 115-113, and 115-114.

4 W 12 Marco Antonio Barrera, February 19, 2000, Las Vegas, Nevada

The two things most remember about this fight are that Barrera got robbed and it was a great fight—in that order. What a shame. To say Barrera was robbed is an insult to Morales, without whom it would not have been a great fight.

It's not by accident when a fight is named THE RING's Fight of the Year, as this one was. It was 12 brutal rounds of back and forth hell for both guys and heaven for the fans in attendance at the Mandalay Bay. Most of the fight featured non-stop punching and world-class skills, a rare combination. Back and forth they went, Morales drilling Barrera with right hands, Barrera pounding Morales with hooks. It was everything great fights are supposed to be and even if the scores of 114-113, 113-114, and 115-112 made Morales the villain, it takes two fighters to make a great fight. Morales was one of them.

5 KO 11 Daniel Zaragoza, September 6, 1997, El Paso, Texas

Now, later in his career, it's fitting that Morales won his first world title not from some trumped-up champ-of-the-week alphabet appointee, but from the respected Zaragoza. It's not like Zaragoza is an all-time great, but he could fight, and this meeting for the WBC super bantamweight title wasn't a walkover for Morales.

Early on, Zaragoza bothered Morales with his goofy awkwardness, launching overhand lefts and looping rights that clearly rattled the more classically schooled challenger. Still, they battled on fairly even terms until later on, when Morales started concentrating on Zaragoza's 39-year-old midsection. It was a smart move. With Zaragoza fading rapidly, Morales pounded him downstairs, most effectively with straight rights, a punch not typically thrown to the body. And in the 11th, one that was particularly well-placed put Zaragoza down for the count at 2:59. "We figured he was getting weaker over the last three rounds, and if I went to the body, I could stop him," Morales said.

6 L 12 Marco Antonio Barrera, June 22, 2002, Las Vegas, Nevada

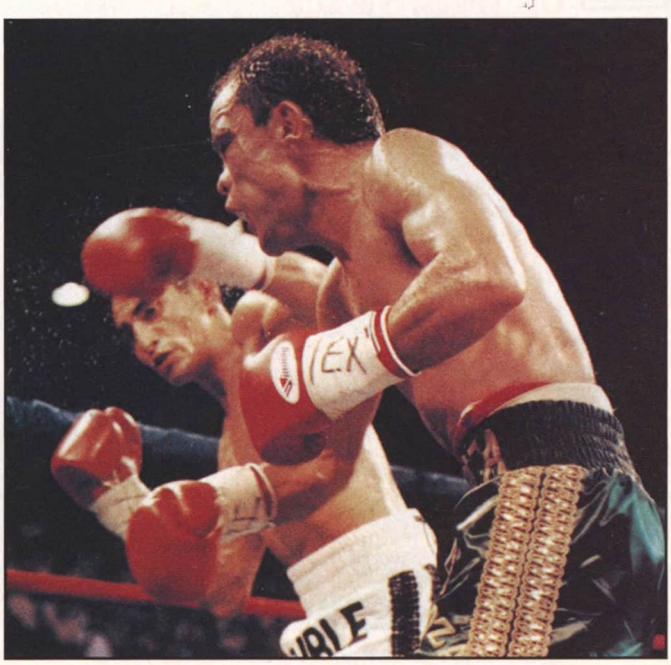
Call it payback. The first time these two met, a majority thought Barrera deserved the decision, but Morales got it. This time most thought Morales, by a hair, had done enough to win. But it went to Barrera by scores of 116-112 and 115-113 (twice), even though he essentially gave up the first half of the fight trying to outbox Morales, a curious strategy to use against a guy who must set and control the pace to be successful.

At any rate, Morales clearly won the fight's first half by jabbing and scoring from the outside with straight right hands. On the occasions that Barrera stood still and fought, Morales right stayed with him. Morales faded down the stretch and was outfought when Barrera changed tactics, but appeared to have done enough to win. "I came well-prepared to outbox him. I guess he reserved himself for the end, but I was still doing well at the end," Morales said. "I still think I won the fight."

7 W 12 Wayne McCullough, October 22, 1999, Detroit, Michigan

There's a distinct line that separates very good fighters from great ones and that line was clearly visible in this match for the WBC super bantamweight title. McCullough, the former WBC bantamweight titlist, just lacked the pop to go with his iron chin and unshakable resolve. and if you can't punch, you can't beat a guy like Morales.

McCullough tried. He went right after Morales and started hurling leather for all he was worth, but Morales was bigger,



Morales rattles Zaragoza en route to winning WBC title

faster, superior mechanically, and just better all-around. He had no trouble matching McCullough's frenetic pace, even in the late rounds, and he turned the tables on McCullough on the inside, doing some good body work down the stretch. By the middle rounds the only drama revolved around whether Morales had the firepower to become the first to stop McCullough. He did not, but took a unanimous decision by scores of 116-112 (twice) and a more representative 118-110.

8 KO 4 Junior Jones, September 12, 1998, Tijuana, Mexico

In a sense this was a part of Morales' rivalry with Barrera, before the rivalry officially began. Jones had whipped Barrera twice, and if Morales could beat him, he'd establish himself as Mexico's premier fighter. It was true that Jones had already been vanquished since his wins over Barrera; Kennedy McKinney stopped him in four rounds in December '97.

The first three rounds were good for Jones. He tagged his opponent with a few overhand rights, produced a swelling under Morales' left eye, and had his nose bleeding. But three rounds were all he was good for, apparently, because he came out for the fourth gasping. Morales pounced, flooring him and cutting him over the eye with a right. A follow-up barrage convinced referee Larry O'Connell to stop it at 2:55, much to the delight of the large hometown crowd that had squeezed into a converted bullring to cheer their new hero. "I came out a little beat up, but everything came out they way we expected it to," Morales said.

9 W 12 Jesus Chavez, February 28, 2004, Las Vegas, Nevada

It's never easy winning world titles in three weight classes, even alphabet titles. If it were, everyone would do it. It wasn't easy for Morales here either. At the end, you had to wonder if the WBC super featherweight belt was really worth it. We hope it was, because this was brutal from the opening bell, a fact not unnoticed by the 8,000 fans at the MGM Grand.

Chavez takes some punishment, but gave out his share as well

In the first, Chavez hurt Morales badly. Morales held on and, as you knew he would, paid Chavez back in the second, twice flooring him. But Chavez wasn't going anywhere either. Even after he injured his shoulder in the same round, effectively rendering him a one-armed fighter the rest of the night, he did what he could. It wasn't nearly enough to win. The scores—118-108, 117-109, 115-112—were accurate enough, but not reflective of how much punishment Chavez had dished out along the way. Chavez got a lot of work done. Morales just did more.

Jones ends up another "Terrible" victim

10 W 12 Carlos Hernandez, July 31, 2004, Las Vegas, Nevada

If you didn't know anything about Morales and just tuned in to this fight, you might have thought he was overrated. A fighter who will be deservedly inducted into the Hall of Fame shouldn't have such a hard fight with Hernandez. Hernandez is a good prizefighter and a gritty, gutsy guy, but he's nowhere near Morales' level. And though the scoring was good and wide at the end—115-113 and 119-109 (twice)—this was no walk in the park.

By the end, Morales was cut over each eye and bruised, and the crowd at the MGM Grand was on its feet cheering the brawl. And it was right to. Morales blasted away with both hands from the outset and had no trouble finding Hernandez. He landed everything. But Hernandez, to his credit, never stopped coming in and firing away. He fought better than he is. That's why it was the fight it was. Fighting a great fighter brings out the best in some guys.

The Professional Record of Erik Morales

1993		
March 29	Jose Orejel, Tijuana, Mexico	KO 2
May 7	Jaime Rodriguez, Tijuana	KO 2
May 25	Oscar Maldonado, Tijuana	KO 3
July 8	Marco Tovar, Tijuana	KO 1
July 26	Jose Alvarez, Tijuana	W 6
Oct. 22	Jamie Abrica, Tijuana	KO 2
Dec. 6	Alfonso Mota, Tijuana	KO 2
1994		
Jan. 21	Paul Olivera, Tijuana	KO 3
March 26	Isidro Nolasco, Mexico City	W 8
Aug. 22	Julio Cardona, Tijuana	KO 2
Oct. 17	Idelfonso Bernal, Tijuana	KO 3
Nov. 28	Ramon Magana, Tijuana	KO 3
Dec. 19	Jose Valdez, Tijuana	KO 3
1995		
Feb. 3	Ricky Hernandez, Tijuana	KO 1
April 21	Enrique Jupiter, Tijuana	KO 6
June 2	Armando Castro, Tijuana	KO 10
July 14	Juan Torres, Las Vegas	W 12
Sept. 9	Alberto Martinez, Las Vegas, NV	KO 4
Nov. 10	Enrique Angeles, Tijuana	W 12
Dec. 18	Kenny Mitchell, Tijuana	KO 2
1996		
Feb. 25	Rudy Bradley, Las Vegas	KO 11
April 22	Lee Cargle, Tijuana	KO 2
June 7	Hector Acero-Sanchez, Las Vegas	W 12
Oct. 12	Pedro Torres, Anaheim, CA	KO 2
Nov. 29	Robby Lovato, Tijuana	W 10
1997		
April 4	Concepcion Velazquez, Las Vegas	KO 8
Sept. 6	Daniel Zaragoza, El Paso, TX (Wins WBC Super Bantamweight Title)	KO 11
Dec. 12	John Lowey, Tijuana (Retains WBC Super Bantamweight Title)	KO 8
1998		
April 3	Remigio Molina, Tijuana (Retains WBC Super Bantamweight Title)	KO 6
May 16	Jose Luis Bueno, Indio, CA (Retains WBC Super Bantamweight Title)	KO 2
Sept. 12	Junior Jones, Tijuana (Retains WBC Super Bantamweight Title)	KO 4
1999		
Feb. 13	Angel Chacon, Las Vegas (Retains WBC Super Bantamweight Title)	KO 2
May 8	Juan Carlos Ramirez, Las Vegas (Retains WBC Super Bantamweight Title)	KO 9
July 31	Reynante Jamili, Tijuana (Retains WBC Super Bantamweight Title)	KO 6
Oct. 23	Wayne McCullough, Detroit (Retains WBC Super Bantamweight Title)	W 12
2000		
Feb. 19	Marco Antonio Barrera, Las Vegas (Retains WBC Super Bantamweight Title)	W 12
June 17	Mike Juarez, Los Angeles, CA	KO 3
Sept. 2	Kevin Kelley, El Paso	KO 7
Dec. 9	Rodney Jones, Tijuana	KO 1
2001		
Feb. 17	Guty Espadas, Las Vegas (Wins WBC Featherweight Title)	W 12
July 28	In Jin Chi, Los Angeles (Retains WBC Featherweight Title)	W 12
2002		
June 22	Marco Antonio Barrera, Las Vegas (For Vacant World Featherweight Title)	L 12
Nov. 16	Paulie Ayala, Las Vegas (Wins Vacant WBC Featherweight Title)	W 12
2003		
Feb. 22	Eddie Croft, Mexico City	KO 3
May 3	Fernando Velardez, Las Vegas	KO 5
Oct. 4	Guty Espadas, Los Angeles	KO 3
2004		
Feb. 28	Jesus Chavez, Las Vegas (Wins WBC Super Featherweight Title)	W 12
July 31	Carlos Hernandez, Las Vegas (Wins IBF Junior Lightweight Title; Retains WBC Super Featherweight Title)	W 12
Nov. 27	Marco Antonio Barrera, Las Vegas (Loses WBC Super Featherweight Title)	L 12
2005		
March 19	Manny Pacquiao, Las Vegas	W 12

No one would complain about seeing Barrera's name on Morales' record a fourth time

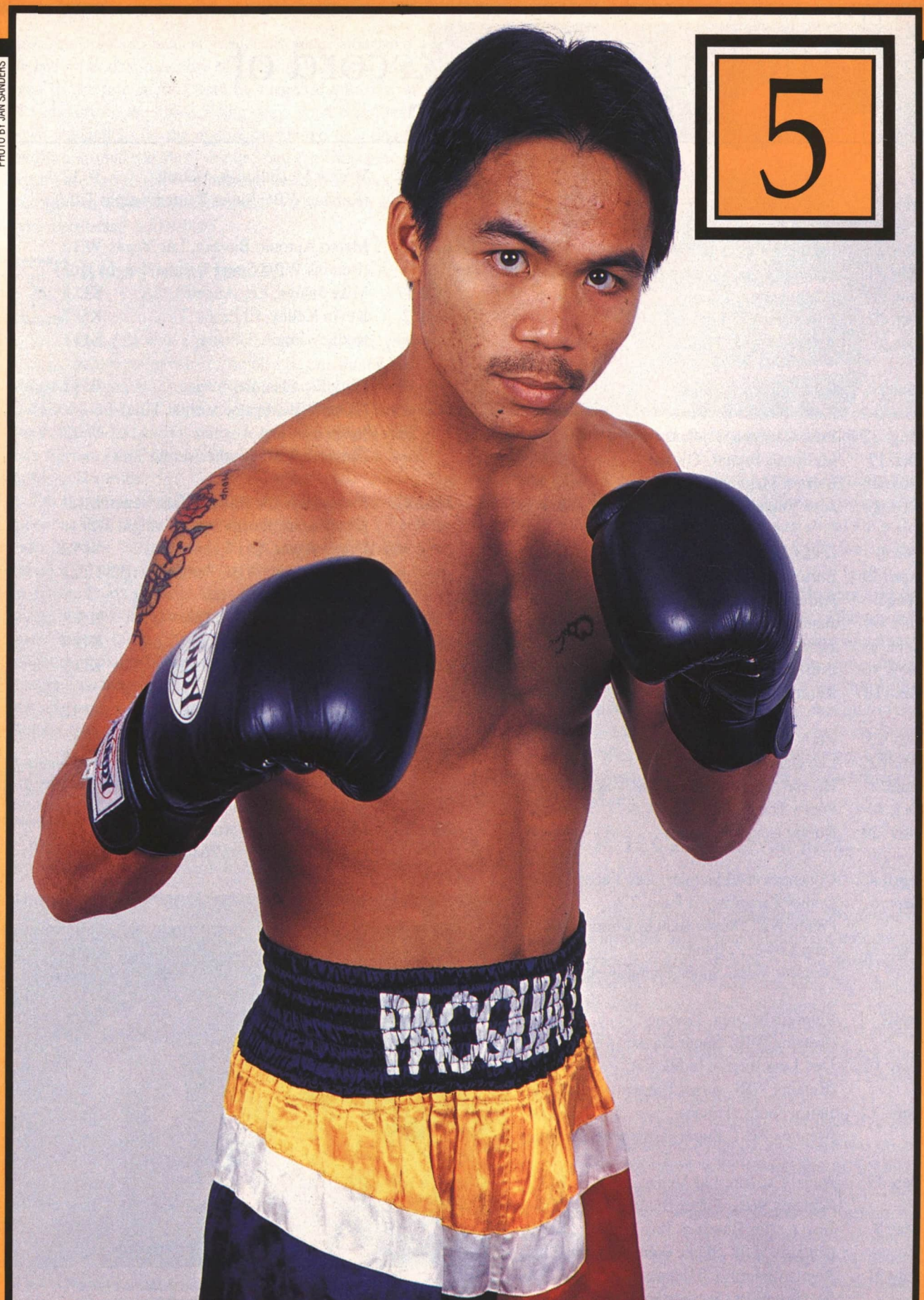


PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Manny Pacquiao

Birthdate: December 17, 1978

Birthplace: Bukidnon, Philippines

Residence: Labangal, General Santos City, Philippines

Weight Class: Junior lightweight

Height: 5'6"

Reach: 67"

Professional Record: 39-3-2 (31)

World titles: WBC flyweight (December 4, 1998-September 17, 1999), IBF super bantamweight (June 23, 2001-November 15, 2003), World featherweight (November 15, 2003-June 16, 2005)

Handlers: Shelly Finkel, manager; Freddie Roach, trainer

Background: Reportedly had 64 amateur fights in the Philippines, winning 60. Turned pro at the age of 16 and quickly built huge national following. After fighting exclusively in the Philippines, traveled to Thailand and won the WBC flyweight title by stopping Chatchai Sasakul in the eighth round. After two defenses, lost the title on the scales, jumped up to super bantamweight, and eventually relocated boxing operation to United States. Relinquished world featherweight title to fight at 130 pounds, where myriad lucrative fights await. Recently reached settlement with promoter Murad Muhammad that freed Pac-Man from unwanted promotional contract.

Style: Two-fisted, aggressive southpaw puncher

Strengths: Power, quickness, athleticism, courage, underrated skills

Weaknesses: Ordinary defense, over-reliance on punch, tendency to cut

Best Performance: Looked unbeatable while dominating Marco Antonio Barrera to win world featherweight title in November '03. Swarmed the favored champion from the start and turned back rallies with two-fisted combinations to score 11th-round stoppage win.

Worst Performance: Failed to make weight and lost WBC flyweight title on scales prior to getting stopped in the third round by Medgoen Singsurat in September 1999.

Future: Any number of fights await at junior lightweight, including rematches with Barrera, Erik Morales, or even Juan Manuel Marquez.

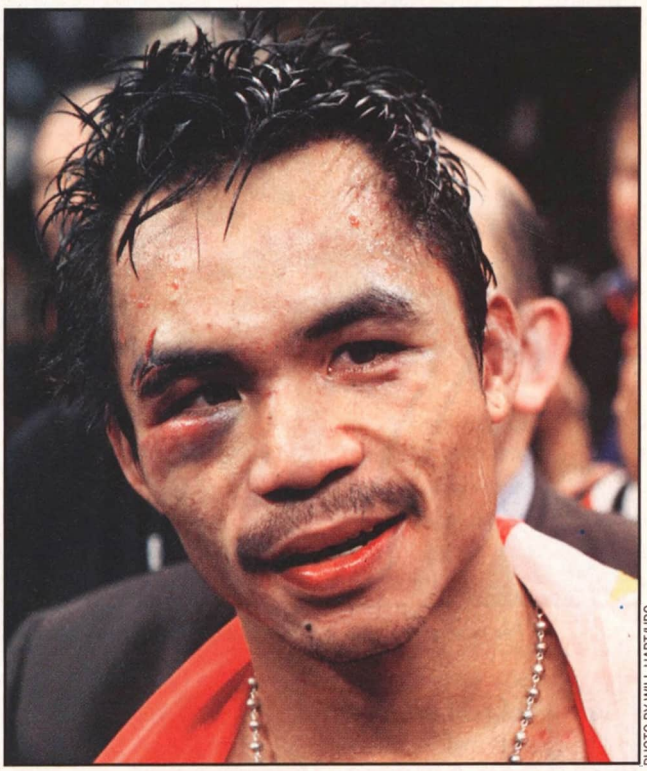


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Report Card

Boxing Ability	C+
Power	A
Defense	C+
Ring Generalship	C
Experience	B+
Quality of Opposition	B+
Chin	A
Stamina	A
Overall Grade	B

Manny Pacquiao's 10 Greatest Fights

Pacquiao shockingly dominated pound-for-pounder Barrera

1 KO 11 Marco Antonio Barrera, November 15, 2003, San Antonio, Texas

You couldn't blame those of us who thought Barrera would win here, and without much trouble. Even with the controversy around his revelation of a past brain injury, even with his switch in promoters, you had to figure he was at the top of his game. He would outbox Pacquiao, who was coming up and just not in Barrera's class as a featherweight. When it was over, Barrera would still be the world featherweight champ.

We were wrong. In front of slightly more than 10,000 at the Alamodome, Pacquiao treated Barrera like a hated sparring partner, repeatedly beating him to the punch and hurting him with overhand lefts and right hooks. Barrera couldn't hold him off and couldn't hurt him. As a result, Pacquiao did what he wanted to, dropping Barrera in the third and the 11th, and even if Barrera landed his share and won an exchange or two, Pacquiao dominated. When Barrera's brother jumped in and asked referee Lawrence Cole to stop it at 2:56 of the round, it was overdue.

2 KO 6 Lehlohonolo Ledwaba, June 23 2001, Las Vegas, Nevada

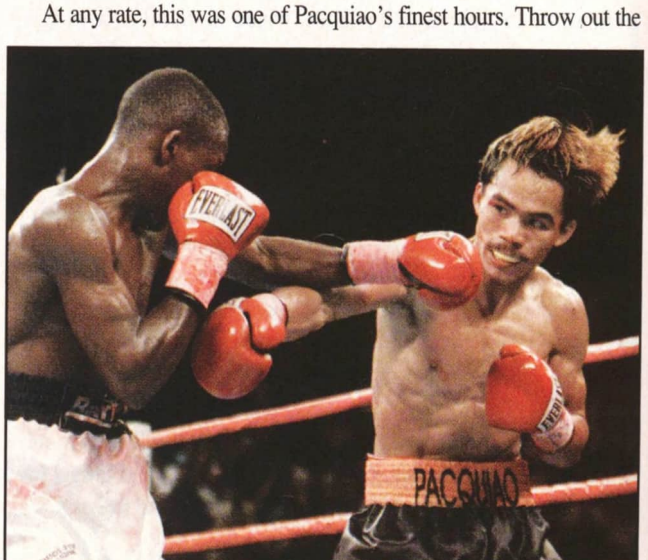
Poor Ledwaba. It was finally supposed to be his time. A big fight, a national audience, an opponent who had taken the fight on two week's notice and was moving up from flyweight. What could go wrong? A lot. Pacquiao had just started training with Freddie Roach and was fighting at a weight that was far batter for him than flyweight. Ledwaba couldn't have known it going in, but his reign as the IBF super bantamweight titlist was about over.

Pacquiao attacked from the opening bell, pounding Ledwaba with a hailstorm of straight left hands and right hooks. He was too fast and hit too hard for Ledwaba, and in the second round he drove him to the canvas with a short left. He bloodied and staggered Ledwaba in the fourth and fifth and dropped him with another left early in he sixth. One more knockdown followed before Joe Cortez stopped at the 0:59 mark. It was brutal.

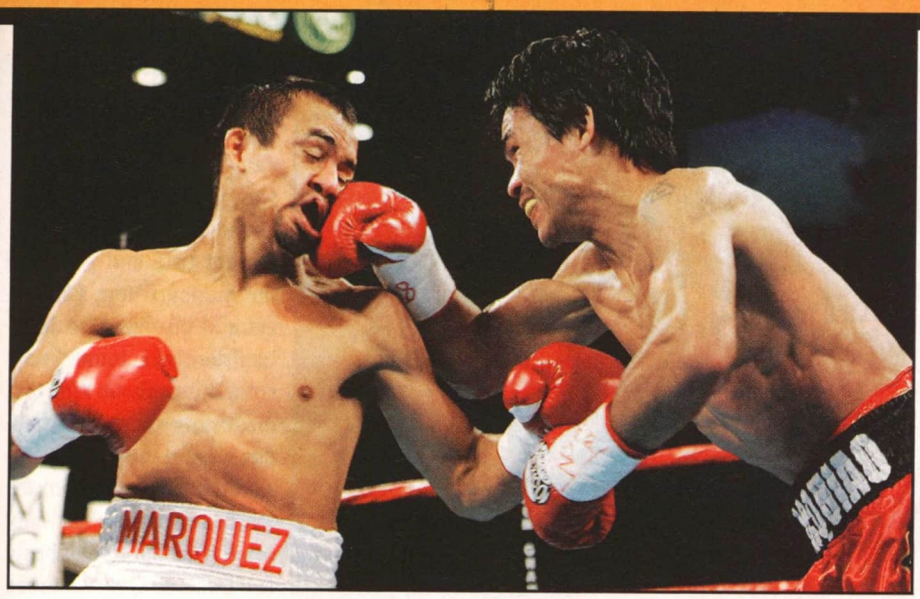
3 D 12 Juan Manuel Marquez, May 8, 2004, Las Vegas, Nevada

Everyone remembers that Marquez got off the floor three times to manage a draw. It's largely forgotten that no one had ever done that to him—and that with a different referee or in a different state, this would have been over in the first. And we forget that it was a scoring error—or at least a scoring aberration—that allowed Marquez to retain the IBF and WBA featherweight titles. If one judge hadn't scored the first round 10-7, rather than 10-6, the way the rules suggest he should have, this would have been a decision win for Pacquiao.

At any rate, this was one of Pacquiao's finest hours. Throw out the



Pacquiao mugged Ledwaba and grabbed the IBF super bantamweight belt



Pac-Man had a huge lead against Marquez, but settled for a draw

first-round bludgeoning and the near-knockout. He stayed with Marquez all night, dropping in bombs, cutting off the ring, and trading on generally even terms with a top-notch featherweight. You couldn't be blamed for scoring it largely in his favor (one of the judges did), and either way it was one of the best fights of the year.

4 L 12 Erik Morales, March 19, 2005, Las Vegas, Nevada

You knew it had to come to this. Pacquiao had already met the other two premier guys around his weight in Barrera and Marquez. There wasn't any way he would go much farther without also testing himself against Morales, because that's the kind of fighter Pacquiao is. Happily, so is Morales.

In front of nearly 15,000 screaming fans at the MGM Grand, Pacquiao and Morales put on a show. Pacquiao bled from early on. Morales scored repeatedly with long right hands and uppercuts, while Pacquiao banged home hard straight lefts and right hooks. They went back and forth for 12 thrilling, bloody rounds, and even if Morales was just better that night—and not insignificantly, a bit bigger—Pacquiao was right with him the whole time, which was reflected in the scoring: 115-113 three times. "I will fight him again anytime, anywhere," Pacquiao said.

We knew he would.

Morales was too tough on this night, but Pac-Man wants a rematch

5 KO 8 Chatchai Sasakul, December 4, 1998, Phuttamonthon, Thailand

Every star has a breakout fight in his past and this is Pacquiao's. He was a 23-1 (14) contender when he went to Thailand to challenge Sasakul for the WBC flyweight belt. Sasakul was undefeated in 33 fights and had won the title when he beat Yuri Arbachakov in their rematch. He'd made three defenses and was light years more seasoned than Pacquiao.

That seasoning showed over the first six rounds, as Sasakul frustrated Pacquiao and outboxed him. But pure punching power and speed have a way of making up for deficiencies, and in the seventh, Pacquiao's straight lefts and right hooks started landing home. After that, it was all downhill for the defending titleholder and Pacquiao stopped him in the eighth to win the title. (Postscript: Pacquiao, at this writing, remains one of only two fighters to have beaten Sasakul, with Arbachakov, who beat Sasakul in their first fight, being the other.)

6 KO 2 Jorge Eliecer Julio, June 8, 2002, Memphis, Tennessee

It's easy to recall that Julio was to some degree past his best days here, but he was still a competitive fighter. He'd recently dropped decisions to Johnny Tapia and Adan Vargas, but there was no shame in that. Before that, he'd run off a 16-fight winning streak. So Julio could still fight.

Pacquiao did to Julio what Lewis later did to Tyson

Unfortunately for him, so could Pacquiao, and he did it better.

Defending the IBF super bantamweight title on the undercard of the Lennox Lewis-Mike Tyson fight at the Pyramid, Pacquiao attacked from the outset and the mere ferocity of his attack discombobulated Julio, who had never been stopped in his 47-fight career. He bloodied Julio's nose within the first minute, dropped him twice in the second round, and was bludgeoning him when referee Bill Clancy stopped it at 1:09 mark.

7 KO 10 Nedal Hussein, October 14, 2000, Manila, Philippines

It had to take a lot for Hussein, coming all the way from Australia, to take on Pacquiao in the Philippines, where Pacquiao possesses rock-star-like fame. But he did, and he had every reason to be confident. He was undefeated in 19 fights and had won both the Australian super bantamweight and Commonwealth super bantamweight titles. It turned out he could fight too.

Fighting without fear, Hussein went right to Pacquiao and punched with him. He floored Pacquiao in the fourth and was fighting more or less on even terms until Pacquiao's power started to take over. He battered Hussein in the fifth, opening up several cuts, and was in charge when referee Carlos Padilla stopped it at 2:00 of the 10th because of the blood. At the time of the stoppage, Pacquiao led on the cards by scores of 87-85 and 87-83 (twice).

8 KO 3 Emmanuel Lucero, July 26, 2003, Los Angeles, California

If there were any questions concerning Pacquiao as a puncher, or, for that matter, about Lucero as a future champion, Pacquiao answered them here. Lucero was an undefeated prospect, but you had to question the wisdom behind throwing him in against Pacquiao at such an early stage in his career. He was green, but it was a shot at the IBF junior featherweight title and you take the money where you can get it in this business. Maybe Lucero's team knew something about him that made this short-term payday a smart move.

This was ugly from the start, and if you had any heart, you had to feel badly for Lucero. Overwhelmed almost immediately by Pacquiao's aggression and speed, he adopted an entirely defensive posture and threw wide amateurish punches whenever Pacquiao got close. It looked like the challenger had simply forgotten how to fight. Pacquiao didn't and he tagged Lucero with a left in the third that sent him careening across the ring, leading to a perfectly timed stoppage.

9 KO 1 Sungkwon Chae, June 28, 2000, Quezon, Philippines

Pacquiao loves taking out prospects. Chae was 23-0 (17) when he traveled from Korea to the Philippines to challenge Pacquiao for the WBC International super bantamweight title, whatever that is. But he wasn't nearly ready. All of his fights had taken place in Korea against no one you've ever heard of, and few, if any of his opponents, had winning records. Pacquiao did exactly what he was supposed to and blew him out. But as it turns out, Chae can fight a little after all; in August 2004 he fought reasonably well in losing a decision to Takashi Koshimoto in Japan.

10 KO 4 Fahsung 3K-Battery, December 11, 2004, Taguig City, Philippines

Great fighters know what to do when they have a big fight coming up (and Pacquiao had a big one coming up against Morales): They take a tune-up and they take care of business. It didn't hurt that this took place in the Philippines, and who knows what Pacquiao would have to do to lose a fight there. But Fahsung wasn't a bad fighter, and with a 44-7-1 (23) record compiled mainly in Thailand, he looked to be able to give Pacquiao a few rounds.

A few is all it took. To the delight of the 25,000 fans who took it in at The Fort in Taguig City, Pacquiao dropped Fahsung four times, the final time with a left uppercut that ended matters at 1:26 of the fourth round.

The Professional Record of Manny Pacquiao

1995		
Jan. 22	Ting Ignacio, Occidental Mindoro, Phil.	W 4
March 18	Pinoy Montejo, Occidental Mindoro	W 4
May 1	Rocky Palma, Cavite, Philippines	W 6
July 1	Dele Decierto, Mandaluyong, Philippines	KO 2
Aug. 3	Flash Simbajon, Mandaluyong	W 6
Sept. 16	Arman Rocil, Mandaluyong	KO 3
Oct. 7	Lolito Laroa, Makati, Philippines	W 8
Oct. 21	Renato Mendones, Palawan, Philippines	KO 2
Nov. 11	Rodulfo Fernandez, Mandaluyong	KO 3
Dec. 9	Rolando Tuyogon, Manila, Philippines	W 10
1996		
Jan. 13	Lito Torrejos, Sucat, Philippines	Tech. Win 5
Feb. 9	Rustico Torrecampo, Mandaluyong	KO by 3
April 27	Marlon Carillo, Manila	W 10
May 20	Jun Medina, Manila	KO 4
June 15	Bert Batiller, General Santos, Philippines	KO 4
July 27	Ippo Gala, Mandaluyong	KO 2
Dec. 28	Sungyul Lee, Muntinlupa, Philippines	KO 2
1997		
March 8	Mike Luna, Muntinlupa	KO 1
April 24	Wookki Lee, Makati, Philippines	KO 1
May 30	Ariel Austria, Almendras, Philippines	KO 6
June 26	Chokchai Chokwiwat, Manila	KO 5
Sept. 13	Melvin Magramo, Cebu, Philippines	W 10
Dec. 6	Tanompdej Singwangcha, Koronadal, Phil.	KO 1
1998		
May 18	Shin Terao, Tokyo	KO 1
Dec. 4	Chatchai Sasakul, Phuttamonthon, Thailand (Wins WBC Flyweight Title)	KO 8
1999		
Feb. 20	Todd Makelin, North Cotabato, Philippines (Non-Title Bout)	KO 3
April 23	Gabriel Mira, Manila (Retains WBC Flyweight Title)	KO 4
Sept. 17	Medgoen Lukchaopormasak, Thammarat, Thailand (Loses WBC Flyweight Title)	KO by 3
Dec. 18	Reynante Jamili, Manila	KO 2
2000		
March 4	Arnel Barotillo, Manila	KO 4
June 28	Sungkwon Chae, Quezon, Philippines	KO 1
Oct. 14	Nadel Hussein, Manila	KO 10
2001		
Feb. 24	Cholho Kang, Antipolo, Philippines	KO 5
April 28	Kumanpetch Kiatvoraphong, Kidapawan	KO 6
June 23	Lehlo Ledwaba, Las Vegas (Wins IBF Junior Featherweight Title)	KO 6
Nov. 10	Agapito Sanchez, San Francisco (Retains IBF Junior Featherweight Title)	Tech. Draw 6
2002		
June 8	Jorge Eliecer Julio, Memphis, TN (Retains IBF Junior Featherweight Title)	KO 2
Oct. 26	Fahprakorb Rakkiatgym, Davao City, Philippines (Retains IBF Junior Featherweight Title)	KO 1
2003		
March 15	Serikzhan Yeshmangbetov, Manila (Non-Title Bout)	KO 5
July 26	Emmanuel Lucero, Los Angeles (Retains IBF Junior Featherweight Title)	KO 3
Nov. 15	Marco Antonio Barrera, San Antonio (Wins World Featherweight Title)	KO 11
2004		
May 8	Juan Manuel Marquez, Las Vegas (Retains World Featherweight Title)	D 12
Dec. 11	Fahsung 3K-Battery, Taguig City, Philippines (Retains World Featherweight Title)	KO 4
2005		
March 19	Erik Morales, Las Vegas	L 12

Marquez and Pacquiao will probably do it again some day

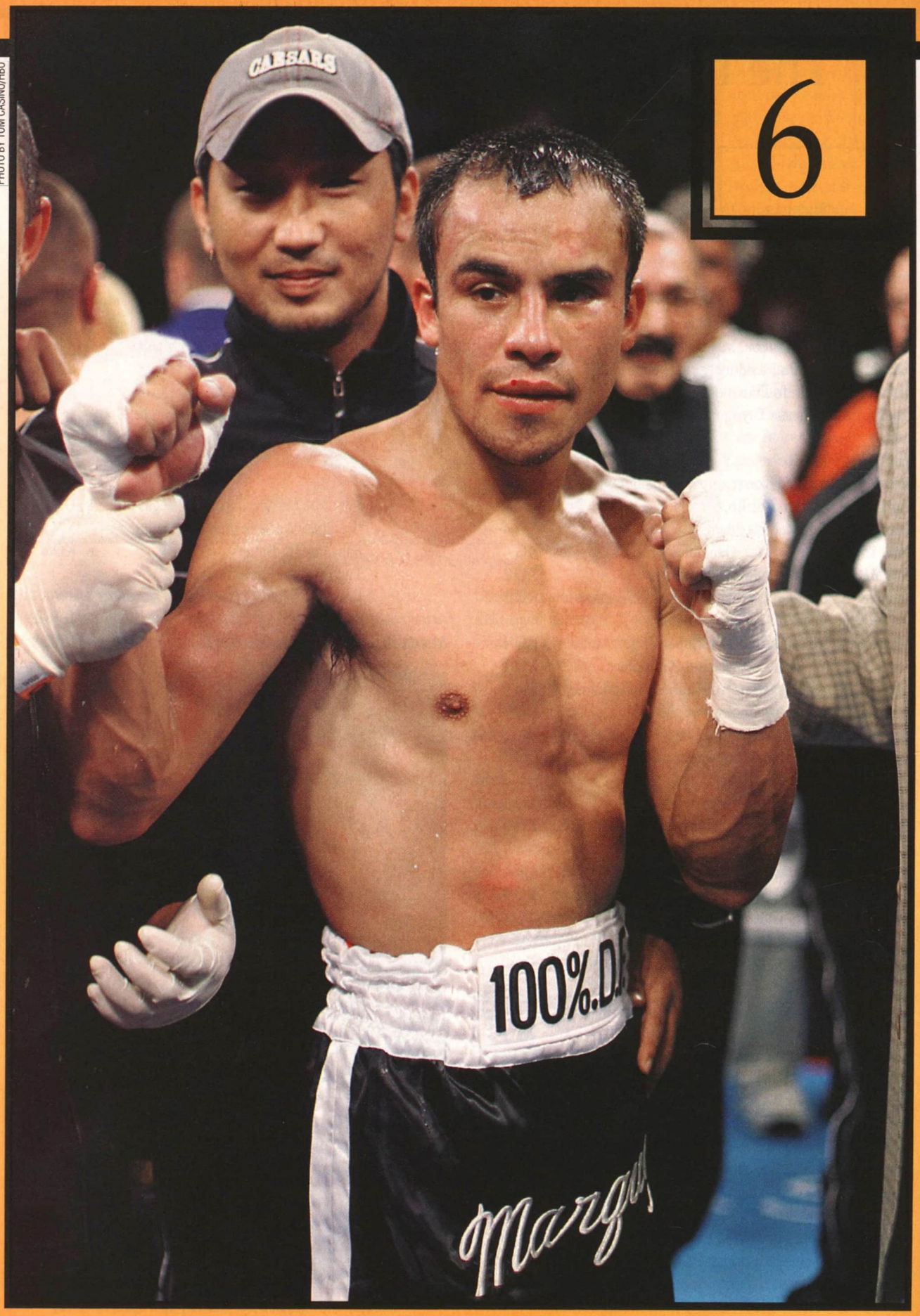


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/HBO

Juan Manuel Marquez

Birthdate: August 23, 1973

Birthplace: Mexico City, Mexico

Residence: Anaheim, California

Weight Class: Featherweight

Height: 5'7"

Reach: 67"

Professional Record: 44-2-1 (33)

World Titles: IBF Featherweight (February 1, 2003-present), WBA featherweight (November 1, 2003-present)

Handler: Ignacio Beristain, trainer and manager

Background: Started boxing as a 12-year-old and had about 30 amateur fights. He and brother Rafael were trained early on by their father, a former pro, before hooking up with legendary Nacho Beristain. Turned pro in 1993 with a disqualification loss to Javier Duran, and then won 29 in a row before dropping a close decision to Freddie Norwood for the WBA featherweight title. Claimed the IBF title by destroying Manuel Medina, and the WBA belt against Derrick Gainer. Wild draw with Manny Pacquiao drew Fight of the Year consideration. Craves big fights against Marco Antonio Barrera, Erik Morales, and Pacquiao.

Style: Sharp-hitting counterpuncher

Strengths: Technical precision, speed, counterpunching, combination punching

Weaknesses: Slow starter, too patient

Best Performance: Was at his precise best breaking down tough Robbie Peden in title eliminator in March '02. Textbook combinations and laser-like counters led to 10th-round stoppage in virtuoso technical performance.

Worst Performance: Appeared hesitant and intimidated in September '99 decision loss to Freddie Norwood for WBA featherweight title. Started slowly, never got fully into fight, and allowed Norwood to dictate pace.

Future: Reported to be negotiating fight with England's Scott Harrison or possibly a rematch with Pacquiao.

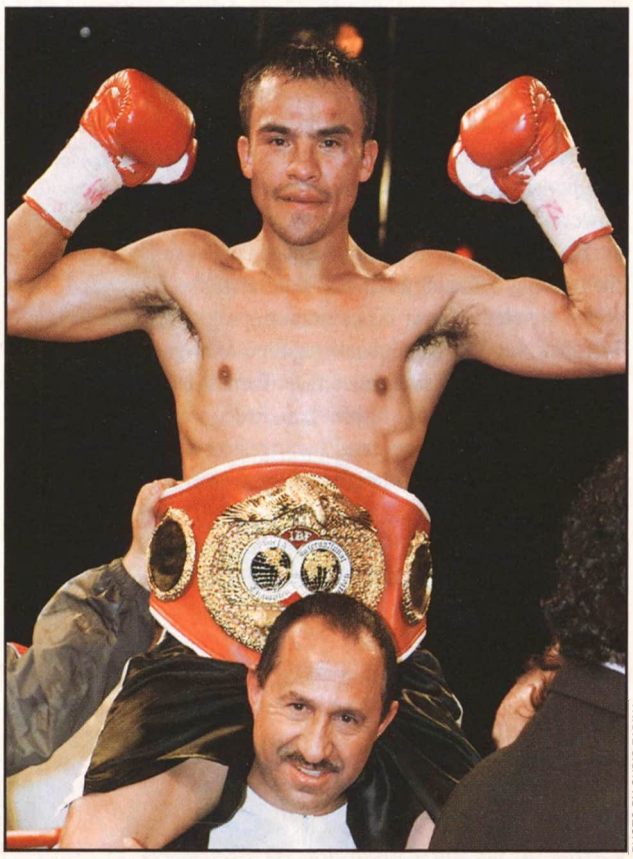


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Report Card

Boxing Ability	A
Power	B
Defense	A-
Ring Generalship	A-
Experience	B+
Quality of Opposition	B+
Chin	B+
Stamina	A
Overall Grade	B

Juan Manuel Marquez' 10 Greatest Fights

1 KO 10 Robbie Peden, March 9, 2002, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

A full nine fights after his disappointing showing against Freddie Norwood, Marquez finally made it back up the ladder to this IBF title eliminator that was also for the vacant NABF and USBA titles. Though far less experienced, Peden was 20-1 (10) and hungry. On paper it was a decent matchup. In application, however, it was a one-sided beating.

Starting quickly for once, Marquez landed straight rights from the opening bell and didn't stop until after the 10th round, when Peden vomited all over his cornermen, prompting them to stop it. Marquez was a machine, bouncing repeated right crosses and left hooks off of Peden's reddened face. Earnest but without the firepower to make Marquez respect him, Peden was methodically dissected and broken down until his digestive tract forced his corner's hand. At the end Marquez led on the cards by scores of 97-93 and 99-91 (twice).

2 KO 7 Manuel Medina, February 1, 2003, Las Vegas, Nevada

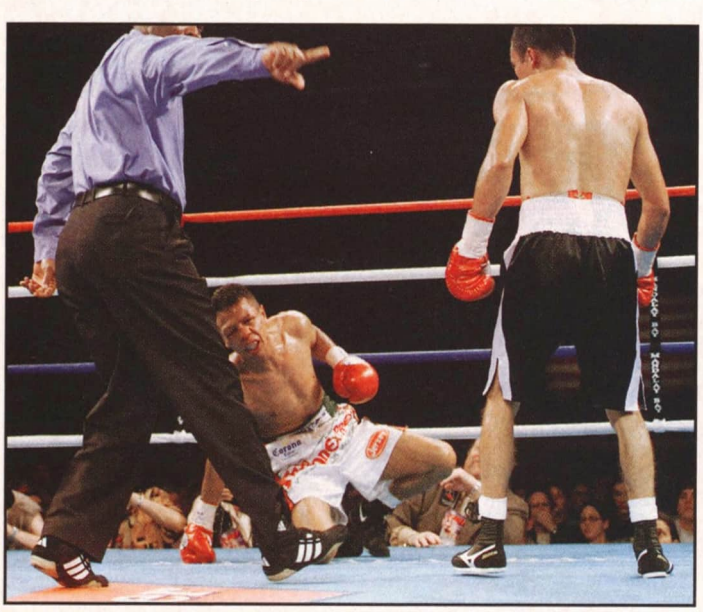
You see Marquez fight and wonder how it took him so long (10 years) to win a world title. That had to be what Medina as thinking as Marquez banged his right eye closed and beat him all over the Mandalay Bay ring. It wasn't a pretty sight almost from the start. A combination dropped Medina in the second round, and it looked like it could end there. It didn't and Medina's reward for his toughness was an extended beating.

Marquez staggered Medina in just about every round and tortured him to the body. Referee Robert Byrd nearly stopped it in the fifth, but waited until 1:18 of the seventh when Medina, bloodied, exhausted, and thoroughly beaten, was dropped by a pair of hooks. "I have been waiting for years for a title," Marquez said. "I thought I was going to take him out in the second round, but like all Mexican fighters, he's a great champion with tremendous heart."

3 D 12 Manny Pacquiao, May 8, 2004, Las Vegas, Nevada

You had to figure going into this one that it would be good. But no one could have predicted that Marquez would get dropped three times in the opening round, or that the 7,000-plus fans at the MGM Grand would get to see the fight of their lives. But that's what happened.

A minute into the fight a straight left dropped Marquez on his trunks. Moments later, another straight left did the same. Looking befuddled, Marquez was tagged, staggered, and dropped a third time. It looked over, and if not in that round, then surely the next. But it wasn't. Marquez came out in the second and started countering Pacquiao's charges. Over the rest of the fight they traded punches and momentum. Toward the end, Marquez was giving at least as well as he got. But a scoring controversy saved the WBA and IBF titles for him. One of the judges scored the first round



Medina was overwhelmed from the start by the hungry Marquez

Marquez regrouped after Pacquiao nearly stopped him in the first

Marquez lands an uppercut against a defenseless Licona

10-7 rather than 10-6, resulting in the draw by scores of 113-113 and 115-110 (twice).

4 KO 9 Marcos Licona, August 16, 2003, Uncasville, Connecticut

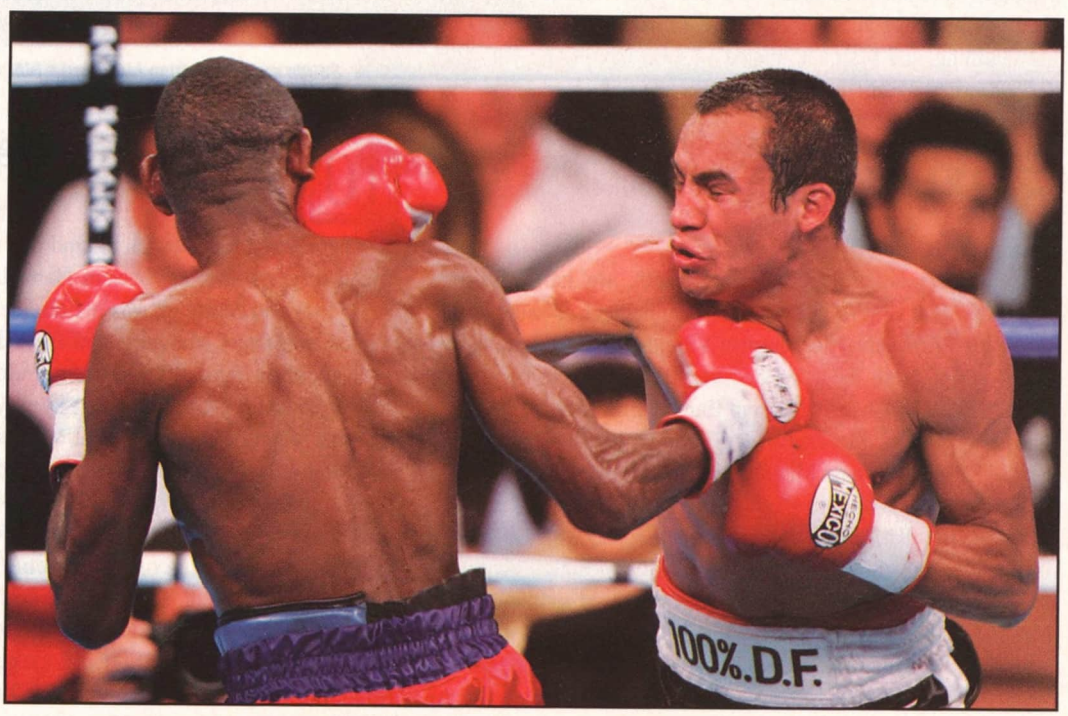
It was bad enough for Licona that he jumped into this fight on short notice after Derrick Gainer pulled out with an alleged torn pectoral muscle. Then he came in over weight and was fined $25,000. The payoff was that he then actually had to fight Marquez. Not a good day all around.

Licona was in way over his head. Still, he stood in there and fought with Marquez, though it was clear from the outset that he was outgunned. Marquez raked him with his usual assortment of right hands and hooks and mixed up his attack between leads and counterpunches. A hard right uppercut dropped Licona in the eighth and a straight right cut him under the left eye in the ninth, after which his corner kept him on his stool. "I really wanted to be in there with Gainer tonight. I hope he is a man and finally faces me in the ring," Marquez said.

5 W 12 Victor Polo, May 7, 2005, Las Vegas, Nevada

You had to feel for Polo. Four other times he'd tried for a title, four other times he'd come up short. He gets a fifth crack at it and who is it against? Not one of the two or three-dozen half-ass contenders out there calling themselves "champions"—guys Polo could actually beat—but Marquez, one of the best in the world. Some guys can never catch a break.

Marquez apparently didn't share our sympathy for poor Polo. He beat him from the first round on, looking a little like a young and better Orlando Canizales, darting around Polo from the sides and strafing him with hooks and right hands. Polo is a hard and tough fighter with almost no real world-class speed or offense, and he had nothing with which to keep Marquez honest. A perfect right hand counter dropped him in the seventh, and Marquez won by scores of 120-107 and 118-109 (twice).



Marquez beat Polo to the punch all night

6 KO 6 Julio Gamboa, August 19, 2001, West Wendover, Utah

You remember Gamboa. In 2000 he gave Felix Machado the fight of his life, flooring him and almost pulling off the upset. If he hadn't been penalized two points for holding, he'd have won. Now, we all knew going in that Machado was no Marquez, and besides, Machado had all but shut out Gamboa in their rematch. Even so, one could be excused for thinking Gamboa could give Marquez a few competitive rounds.

Like we said, Machado is no Marquez and we saw it right away. Marquez battered him from the outset, pounding away with rights and left hooks and drilling Gamboa to the body. He opened Gamboa up over both eyes and finally, Gamboa's corner stopped it after the sixth round. Marquez said afterward that he was ready for any of the featherweight titlists, but apparently they weren't ready for him; he waited another two years for a title shot.

7 KO 3 Raynante Jamili, October 22, 2000, Reno, Nevada

Jamili had had his chances against the best guys around his weight and had fallen short; his countryman Pacquiao stopped him in two rounds in a super bantamweight fight in December 1999, and Morales stopped him in six in defense of the WBC super bantamweight title in July of the same year. But Jamili had won a couple of fights since the loss to Pacquiao, he had 46 wins on his ledger, and Marquez was only four fights removed from his loss to Norwood. So why not?

Marquez is not a one-shot puncher. Look at when he scores his knockouts and you'll see the evidence. But he was against Jamili. The difference in skill-level was alarming, and Marquez wasted no time exploiting it. He floored Jamili twice in the second round and then stretched him for the count at 1:14 of the third.

8 KO 8 Remigio Molina, November 20, 1999, Las Vegas, Nevada

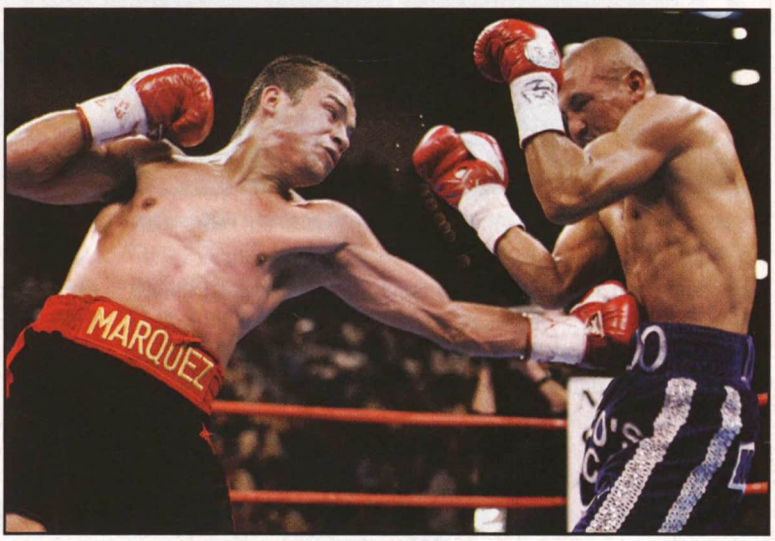
For any top-notch featherweight hopeful, Molina was a good measuring stick. He'd beaten a full complement of second- and third-raters in Argentina—Olegario Villejos, Hector Mari, Walter Farias—and lost to the good and very good guys in his weight class: Julio Pablo Chacon, Naseem Hamed, Erik Morales (in a title fight). Hamed and Morales stopped him in two and six rounds, respectively. How would Marquez do?

About as well. Fighting aggressively, he backed Molina up starting in the first and floored him in the second with a combination. Evidencing no trouble whatever with Molina's southpaw stance, Marquez drilled him with counters and paid his usual attention to his opponent's midsection. It paid off when Molina wore down, opening the door for Marquez to score three knockdowns in the eighth, the last of which convinced referee Kenny Bayless to stop it at 2:01 of the round.

9 W 12 Orlando Salido, September 18, 2004, Las Vegas, Nevada

You couldn't blame Marquez for being a little cautious going into this one. It was his first fight after the wild one against Pacquiao, and while Salido, a mandatory alphabet challenger, was no world-beater, he was a solid guy. After several losses early in his career, he'd put together a couple of modest winning streaks, losing recently just to Alejandro Gonzalez and William Abelyan. Overall, he was 23-8-2 (15) coming into the fight with Marquez.

You could call it boring if you wanted to, but to Marquez boring was good. He did his thing: befuddled Salido with his usual dizzying assortment of double jabs, right crosses, and counter left hooks and made himself awful hard to hit in return. But he was more cautious than usual, no doubt an aftereffect of his life-and-death struggle with Pacquiao. Still, his work got him the win by a typically wide margin. The scores were 118-110 and 117-111 (twice).



Salido pays for setting his guard a bit too high

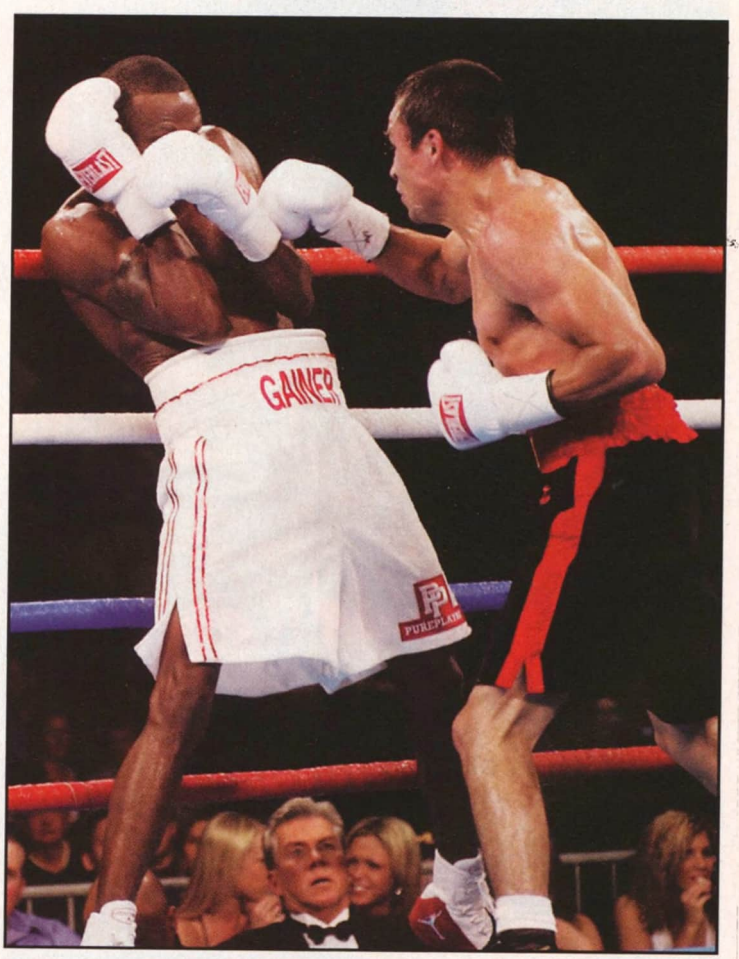
10 KO 2 Wilfredo Vargas, May 10, 1999, Inglewood, California

There was a long stretch around this time when Marquez was trying to get a shot at Naseem Hamed. Naz held the spurious WBO title and Marquez was his number-one contender. Hamed wanted no part of Marquez, and the WBO let Hamed get away with avoiding him. All Marquez could do was keep fighting, hoping he could get the title shot by staying active. The problem was that when he fought guys at Vargas' level, Marquez looked like Joe Louis. No wonder Hamed wouldn't fight him.

Marquez shook Vargas with a left hook within the fight's first minute and a short right produced a quick knockdown before the round was over. As soon as the eight-count was done, a left hook sent Vargas down again, this time hard. He got up again, walked into a right that wobbled him, and then somehow made it to the bell. It didn't get any better. Marquez floored him again in the second and Vargas' corner saved him at 2:02 of the round.

The Professional Record of Juan Manuel Marquez

1993		
May 29	Javier Duran, Mexico City	L Disq. 1
June 26	Javier Quiroz, Mexico City	KO 3
Sept. 18	Israel Flores, Mexico City	KO 2
Oct. 1	Isaac Cortes, Mexico City	KO 5
1994		
May 7	Roman Poblano, Mexico City	W 6
Aug. 27	Gregorio Silva, Mexico City	KO 2
Oct. 1	Israel Flores, Mexico City	W 4
Nov. 12	Jose Luis Montes, Mexico City	KO 2
Dec. 3	Israel Gonzalez, Las Vegas	KO 4
1995		
Jan. 30	Martin Ochoa, Inglewood, CA	KO 1
April 24	Julio Cesar Sanchez-Leon, Inglewood	W 10
July 10	Julio Cesar Portillo, Inglewood	KO 6
Sept. 25	Miguel Rodriguez, Inglewood	KO 1
Nov. 6	Julian Wheeler, Inglewood	KO 10
1996		
March 4	Hector Ulises Chong, Inglewood	KO 4
April 29	Julio Gervacio, Anaheim, CA	KO 8
July 8	Freddy Cruz, Inglewood	W 10
Oct. 19	Darryl Pinckney, Stateline, NV	W 10
Dec. 9	Rodrigo Valenzuela, Inglewood	KO 8
1997		
Feb. 3	Cedric Mingo, Anaheim	KO 10
April 21	Agapito Sanchez, Inglewood	W 12
July 14	Catalino Becerra, Inglewood	KO 7
Sept. 27	Vincent Howard, Stateline	KO 12
Nov. 22	Alfred Kotey, Las Vegas	W 12
1998		
March 16	Luis Samudio, Inglewood	KO 6
June 20	Juan Gerardo Cabrera, Las Vegas	KO 4
Aug. 22	Enrique Jupiter, Las Vegas	KO 8
Oct. 24	Francisco Arreola, Las Vegas	KO 3
1999		
Feb. 20	Jose Garcia, Coachella, CA	KO 1
May 10	Wilfredo Vargas, Inglewood	KO 2
Sept. 11	Freddie Norwood, Las Vegas (For WBA Featherweight Title)	L 12
Nov. 20	Remigio Molina, Las Vegas	KO 8
2000		
May 20	Roque Cassiani, Lake Tahoe, NV	W 12
Aug. 27	Daniel Jimenez, Las Vegas	KO 7
Oct. 22	Reynante Jamili, Reno, NV	KO 3
2001		
Feb. 11	Sean Fletcher, Reno	KO 7
April 1	Baby Lorona, Reno	KO 2
Aug. 19	Julio Gamboa, West Wendover, UT	KO 6
Oct. 19	Johnny Walker, Worley, ID	KO 1
2002		
March 9	Robbie Peden, Pittsburgh, PA	KO 10
June 21	Hector Marquez, Las Vegas	KO 10
2003		
Feb. 1	Manuel Medina, Las Vegas (Wins Vacant IBF Featherweight Title)	KO 7
Aug. 16	Marcos Licona, Uncasville, CT (Non-Title Bout)	KO 9
Nov. 1	Derrick Gainer, Grand Rapids, MI (Wins WBA Featherweight Title; Retains IBF Title)	Tech. Win 7
2004		
May 8	Manny Pacquiao, Las Vegas (Retains WBA & IBF Featherweight Titles; For World Featherweight Title)	D 12
Sept. 18	Orlando Salido, Las Vegas (Retains WBA & IBF Featherweight Titles)	W 12
2005		
May 7	Victor Polo, Las Vegas (Retains WBA & IBF Featherweight Titles)	W 12



After losing the WBA featherweight title, Gainer pulled out of the rematch

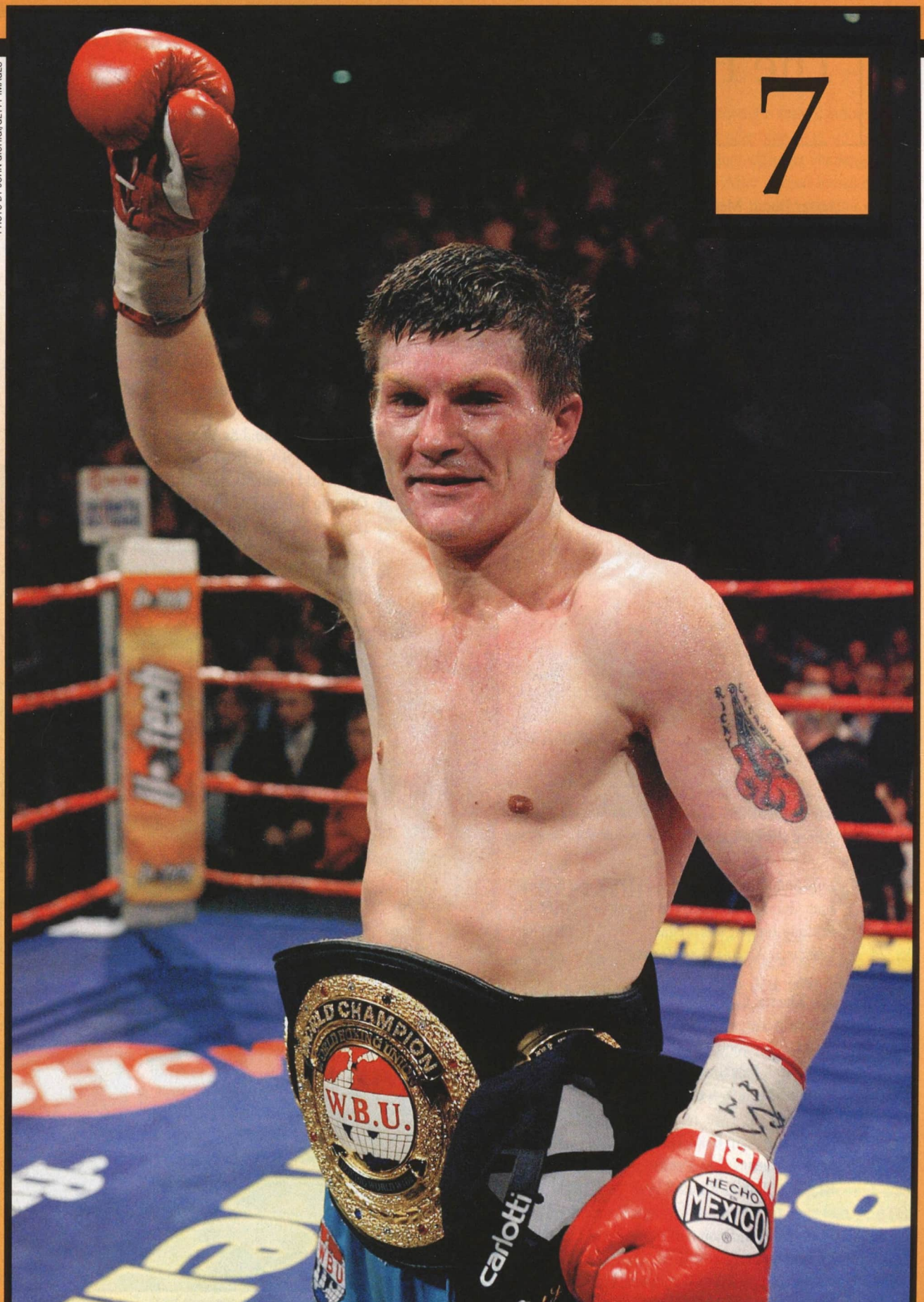


PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Ricky Hatton

Birthdate: October 6, 1978

Birthplace: Stockport, England

Residence: Manchester, England

Weight Class: Junior welterweight

Height: 5'6"

Reach: 65"

Professional Record: 39-0 (29)

World Title: World Junior welterweight (June 4, 2005-present)

Handlers: Frank Warren, manager; Billy Graham, trainer

Background: Started kickboxing around age 11, but when he was told his legs were too short, he took up boxing. Won several national amateur titles while in his teens and turned pro at 18. Exciting style and humble personality quickly endeared him to local fans and he built up huge following in England (His fight with Kostya Tszyu at the 22,000-seat M.E.N. Arena sold out in three hours). Was developed slowly, and at home while capturing British light welterweight title, and has fought in United States just three times. Many accused Frank Warren of overprotecting him, but strategy proved right with win over Tszyu.

Style: Aggressive, swarming, pressure fighter

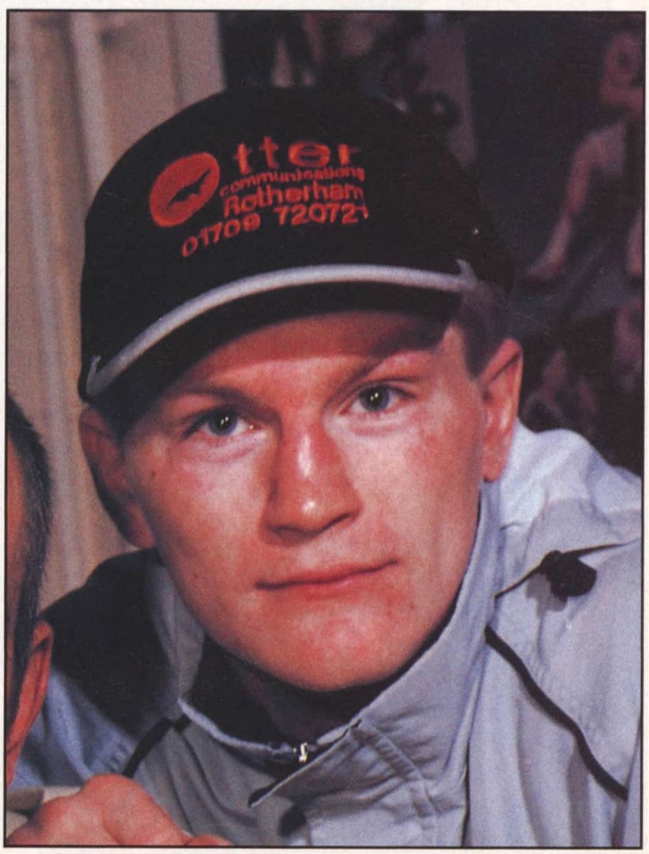
Strengths: Conditioning, youth, bodypunching, strength

Weaknesses: Porous defense, average power, prone to facial injuries

Best Performance: In most important fight of career, wore down and outlasted Tszyu to win world junior welterweight title. Forced Tszyu back throughout, outworked him inside, and convinced him to stay on his stool after the 11th round.

Worst Performance: Looked flat and uninspired while decisioning awkward Carlos Vilches in Manchester in June 2004. Blamed performance on a hand injury that cut his training time in half.

Future: Big fights with Floyd Mayweather, Miguel Cotto, or Diego Corrales loom, but Carlos Maussa may be next.



Report Card

Boxing Ability	B-
Power	B
Defense	C+
Ring Generalship	B
Experience	B
Quality of Opposition	B-
Chin	A
Stamina	A+
Overall Grade	B

Ricky Hatton's 10 Greatest Fights

Hatton overwhelms Tszyu, the overwhelming favorite

1 KO 11 Kostya Tszyu, June 4, 2005, Manchester, England

This was supposed to be the best of times for Tszyu. He'd just come off a long layoff and a pair of serious injuries to demolish Sharmba Mitchell, whom everyone viewed as his biggest threat. Even if Hatton could fight at a world-class level, which remained to be seen, as Frank Warren had refused to match him against another top-10 140-pounder, this was Tszyu we were talking about, the world junior welterweight champion.

Hatton didn't care. From the opening bell until Tszyu chose to stay in his corner after the 11th round, Hatton was in his face, mauling, pushing, grappling, occasionally punching, and most important, backing Tszyu up, much to the delight of the 22,000 roaring Hattonites in Manchester's MEN Arena. Tszyu's strategy to catch Hatton on the way in fizzled when Hatton would either slip or take without effect that first incoming shot and then just outwork Tszyu inside and muscle him to the ropes. Significantly, all three judges had Hatton ahead at the end.

2 KO 10 Ray Oliveira, December 11, 2004, London, England

Yes, Oliveira, at 36, was past his best days. And with the exception of his win over Vivian Harris, he'd never really stepped up out of his class and beat a world-ranked guy. Losses to Vernon Forrest, Jake Rodriguez, Ben Tackie, and others demonstrated his place in the junior welterweight hierarchy. But he'd always been reasonably competitive, he'd never been beaten up too badly, and he'd not been stopped in 60 pro fights.

Hatton floored Oliveira in the first round, and by the end he'd busted both his eardrums and cut him over both eyes. His swarming, non-stop attack wore Oliveira down, and by the middle rounds, Oliveira, who in his day had set Punchstat records with his own tireless attack, was punching only to keep Hatton off, and not too successfully. After taking a hard right to the side of the head in the 10th, he took a knee and shook his head, signaling his surrender to referee Mickey Vann, who stopped it at 1:38 of the round.

3 W 12 Ben Tackie, December 13, 2003, Manchester, England

It was no secret what you had to do to beat Tackie, even this slightly past-his-prime version, you had to box him. The question was whether or not Hatton had the kind of legs and skills needed to do it. He's a swarmer, for cripe's sake. And, if he couldn't outbox him, did he have the firepower he'd need to hurt Tackie, whose concrete jaw was legendary?

We found out what we needed to. Contrary to preflight claims that he would go chest-to-chest with Tackie, Hatton boxed from the opening round, jabbing well and constantly circling. Throughout the early rounds he kept Tackie outside and off-balance. Hatton faded a little late, allowing Tackie to make a run and causing some minor alarm among the 17,000 faithful at the MEN Arena. But Hatton took the decision by a wide margin—118-110 and 120-109 (twice)—and said afterward, "I showed I've got more than just work rate. I always knew I was ready for this level, and I've stepped up at the right time."

Against Tackie, "The Hitman" proved he could box

4 W 12 Eamonn Magee, June 1, 2002, Manchester, England

Before Hatton could claim to be the best junior welterweight in the world, he had to prove he was the best junior welterweight in England. And it wasn't a given; Magee was a tough, awkward southpaw who'd lost just twice in 25 fights—to Paul Burke and American Teddy Reid. It didn't take much to build this into a superfight of sorts, which suited each guy fine.

In the first round, the hard-charging Hatton suffered the first knockdown of his career when Magee dumped him with a counter right hook off the ropes. He shook Hatton in the second, too, and it became clear that Hatton couldn't win fighting the way he normally fights. So he adjusted. He boxed when they were in the center of the ring, and when Magee tried to lure him into the ropes, Hatton got in, did damage, and got back out. It worked and led him to a unanimous decision win by scores of 115-112 and 116-111 (twice).

5 W 12 Vince Phillips, April 5, 2003, Manchester, England

No one is saying that Phillips, at 39 years old, was the same fighter who'd beaten Kostya Tszyu in 1997. But he wasn't terrible; he'd recently strung together several wins before dropping a decision to top-rated Sharmba Mitchell. It didn't help his cause that on the eve of the fight he was threatening to leave the country over a money dispute with the promoter, but Phillips came into this a live underdog, capable of giving Hatton a test.

It turned out that Hatton's chin was indeed tested by several early-round rights from Phillips, and an uppercut later on that shook him. But more noteworthy was Phillips' resolve, which held up admirably under the pounding. Phillips never went down but he took a good, hard beating and was a bloody, exhausted mess at the end. Hatton worked him over from the start, pounding any part of Phillips he could hit, and he got about all of them. The decision was unanimous, the scores lopsided: 120-108, 120-107, and 119-109.

6 KO 9 Mikhail Krivolapov, February 9, 2002, Manchester, England

You can't say Hatton didn't have distractions coming into this one. The night before the fight, his year-old son was rushed to the hospital with a fever after losing consciousness, a favorite uncle died shortly before the fight, and Hatton injured his Achilles tendon in training. None of that kept him from putting a beating on poor Krivolapov, who was tougher than he should have been.

Krivolapov had little trouble fining Hatton's chin and scored well over the first couple of rounds. But whenever he punched, Hatton was on him. When he didn't punch, Hatton was on him. Between rounds, it seemed, Hatton was on him. Hatton scored with everything. The crowd of 12,000 ate it up until 0:20 of the ninth round, when referee Mickey Vann stepped in, finally, marking the first time Krivolapov had been stopped. "Not everything in life runs smoothly, and you have to learn to overcome obstacles," Hatton said. Krivolapov undoubtedly agreed.

7 KO 5 Michael Stewart, October 1, 2004, Manchester, England

You had to admire the courage of Stewart, clearly a tough but mostly ordinary club fighter, going all the way to Manchester to face Hatton in front of a huge and ornery crowd. Clearly, it represented a huge chance for him. It was an IBF title eliminator so it was hard to pass up, but Stewart's record in Manchester stood at

Hatton punishes Phillips along the ropes

Nobody ever put a beating on Stewart like Hatton

0-1. Six months earlier, he'd dropped a decision to Sharmba Mitchell in the same ring.

Stewart found out pretty quickly that facing Hatton was not like facing Mitchell. Hatton dropped him twice in the first, battered him all over the ring in rounds two, three and four, and stopped him in the fifth when referee Dave Parris waved it off at the 2:57 mark. It was as complete and brutal a beating as anyone had ever given Stewart, who had never been stopped.

8 KO 9 Aldo Rios, September 27, 2003, Manchester, England

It's easy to underestimate this victory; Rios has been a lightweight for his entire career, and he's fought almost exclusively out of Argentina. But he's a tough, durable guy who had never been stopped before, and that included losses to Artur Grigorian and Stevie Johnston. Granted, neither were big punchers, but neither is Hatton, not really.

This was a textbook display of bodypunching. After dropping Rios in the first with a left hook to the head, Hatton pounded Rios all night to the body. When Rios punched, Hatton countered to the body. When Rios covered up, Hatton hit him in the body. That's how you take out a game guy like Rios, and that's how Hatton did it. After another left hook dropped Rios at the end of the ninth, referee Mickey Vann went to Rios' corner and suggested that the fighter had taken enough. The corner agreed.

9 KO 6 Dennis Pedersen, April 3, 2004, Manchester, England

You couldn't have blamed Hatton for not being up for this one. His opponent was supposed to be Kelson Pinto, who is long-armed, tall, and heavy-handed. But 72 hours before the fight, Pinto pulled out with the flu, another in a long line of potentially tough fights for Hatton that fell apart at the last moment. Nothing against Pedersen, a smallish boxer who gave it what he could, but Hatton was looking for a bigger challenge than Pedersen could provide.

Pedersen did all right in the first, holding his own and even tagging Hatton with a couple of hooks. But Hatton was too strong and started imposing that strength in the second. The beating started in earnest in the third, and in the fourth, a series of hooks to the body twice forced Pedersen to take a knee. He somehow made it to the sixth when a right hand sent him careening, which was enough for referee David Parris to stop it at 2:32 of the round.

10 KO 4 Joe Hutchinson, December 14, 2002, Newcastle, England

Not long before falling to Hatton, Hutchinson had gone 10 hard, bloody rounds with Arturo Gatti. He'd since been stopped in a round by Teddy Reid, but anyone who saw the Gatti fight knew Hutchinson was tough. Not a future world champion, but if you thought he could give Hatton a few good rounds, maybe even make it a little interesting, we wouldn't have blamed you.

Didn't happen. As usual, Hatton was much too strong for his opponent, and after a slow first round, he started getting to Hutchinson. Some guys go a whole career without ever stopping someone with a bodyshot, but Hatton seems disappointed when he doesn't, and he put Hutchinson down and out with a hook to the liver at 1:16 of the fourth. "I didn't think he'd go in the opening rounds," said Hatton. "I wanted to impress, and when you get a test you always want to do it better than your rival."

Hatton went to the body all night against Rios

The Professional Record of Ricky Hatton

1997		
Sept. 11	Kid McAuley, Widnes, England	KO 1
Dec. 19	Robert Alvarez, New York	W 4
1998		
Jan. 17	David Thompson, Bristol, England	KO 1
March 27	Paul Salmon, Telford, England	KO 1
April 18	Karl Taylor, Manchester, England	KO 1
May 30	Mark Ramsey, Bristol	W 6
July 18	Anthony Campbell, Sheffield, England	W 6
Sept. 19	Pascal Montulet, Oberhausen, Germany	KO 2
Oct. 31	Kevin Carter, Atlantic City	KO 1
Dec. 19	Paul Denton, Liverpool, England	KO 6
1999		
Feb. 27	Tommy Peacock, Oldham, England	KO 2
April 3	Brian Coleman, London, England	KO 2
May 29	Dillon Carew, Halifax, England	KO 5
July 17	Mark Ramsey, Doncaster, England	W 6
Oct. 9	Bernard Paul, Manchester	KO 4
Dec. 11	Mark Winters, Liverpool	KO 4
2000		
Jan. 29	Leoncio Garces, Manchester	KO 3
March 25	Pedro Alonso Teran, Merseyside, England	KO 4
May 16	Ambioris Figuero, Warrington, England	KO 4
June 10	Gilbert Quiros, Detroit, MI	KO 2
Sept. 23	Giuseppe Lauri, Bethnal Green, England	KO 5
Oct. 21	Jonathan Thaxton, London	W 12
2001		
March 26	Tony Pep, London	KO 4
July 7	Jason Rowland, Manchester	KO 4
Sept. 15	John Bailey, Manchester	KO 5
Oct. 27	Freddie Pendleton, Manchester	KO 2
Dec. 15	Justin Rowsell, London	KO 2
2002		
Feb. 9	Mikhail Krivolapov, Manchester	KO 9
June 1	Eamonn Magee, Manchester	W 12
Sept. 28	Stephen Smith, Manchester	W Disq. 2
Dec. 14	Joe Hutchinson, Newcastle, England	KO 4
2003		
April 5	Vince Phillips, Manchester	W 12
Sept. 27	Aldo Nazareno Ríos, Manchester	KO 9
Dec. 13	Ben Tackie, Manchester	W 12
2004		
April 3	Dennis Holbaek Pedersen, Manchester	KO 6
June 12	Carlos Wilfredo Vilches, Manchester	W 12
Oct. 1	Michael Stewart, Manchester	KO 5
Dec. 11	Ray Oliveira, London	KO 10
2005		
June 4	Kostya Tszyu, Manchester (Wins World Junior Welterweight Title)	KO 11

Hatton busted Oliveira's eardrums and stopped him 10

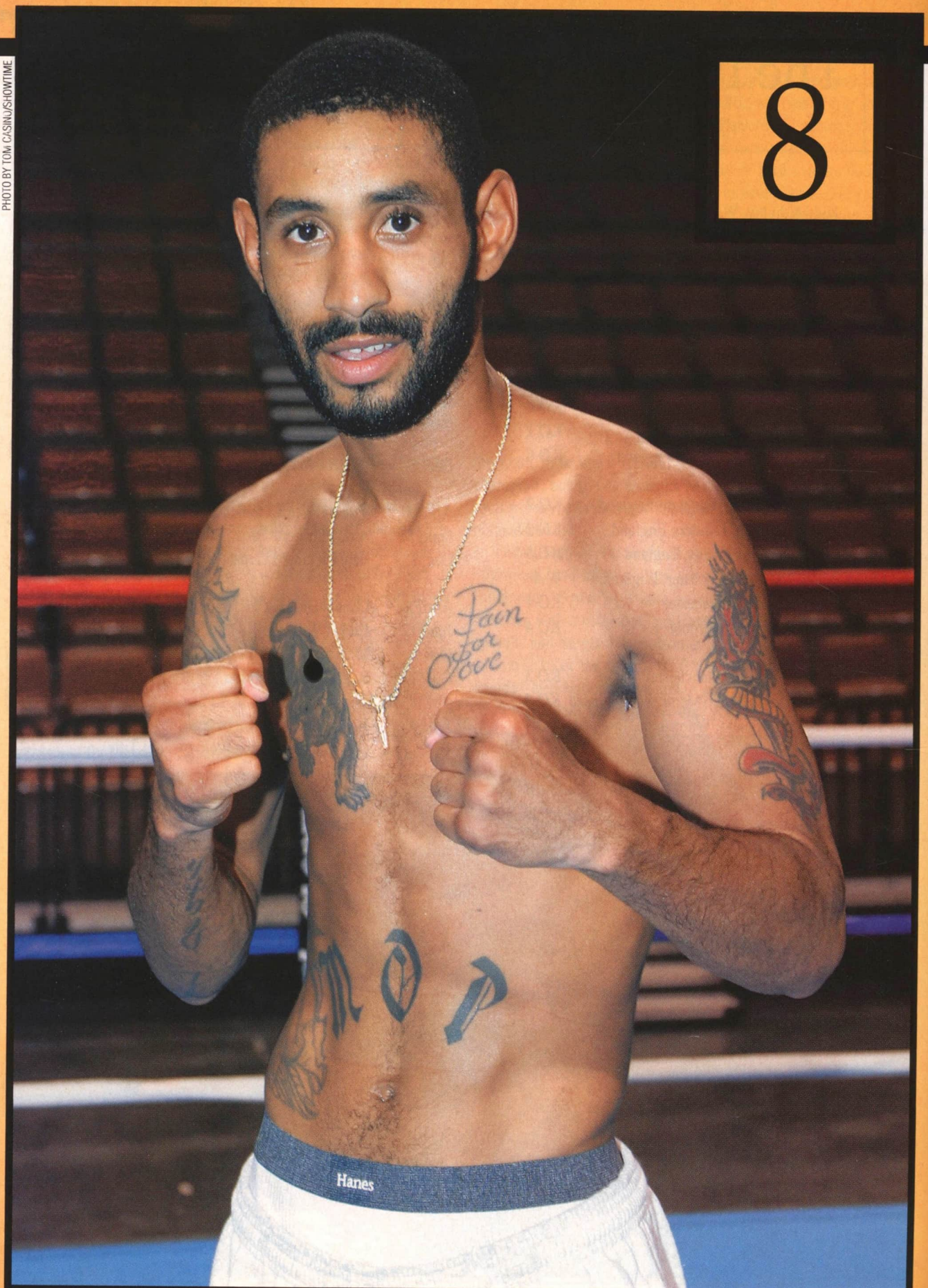


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Diego Corrales

Birthdate: August 25, 1977

Birthplace: Columbia, South Carolina

Residence: Las Vegas, Nevada

Weight Class: Lightweight

Height: 5'11"

Reach: 70"

Professional Record: 40-2 (33)

World Titles: IBF junior lightweight (October 23, 1999-January 20, 2001), World lightweight (May 7, 2005-present)

Handlers: James Prince, manager; Joe Goossen, trainer

Background: Was born in Columbia, South Carolina, and raised in Sacramento, California. Started boxing at the age of nine and had 117 amateur fights, winning 105. Turned pro in March 1996 and after winning two of his first four by decision, went on 14-fight kayo streak, including run of four consecutive first-round knockouts. Won the IBF junior welterweight title against Roberto Garcia and made four defenses before losing to Floyd Mayweather. Did almost two years in prison for assaulting his wife. After resuming career, split two bouts with Joel Casamayor before turning in memorable performance in electrifying slugfest with Jose Luis Castillo to win world lightweight title.

Style: Long-armed, heavy-handed powerpuncher who also can box

Strengths: Size, punching power, toughness

Weaknesses: Chin, prone to swelling, average defense, slow starter

Best Performance: Showed remarkable resilience and skill while stopping Jose Luis Castillo in 10th round in lightweight world title fight in May '05. Slugged on even terms until 10th when he was dropped twice and appeared ready to go before rallying to win in same round. Near lock for Fight of the Year.

Worst Performance: Was outclassed by Floyd Mayweather in January '01 meeting for WBC super featherweight title, suffering five knockdowns before getting stopped in the 10th.

Future: A rematch with Joe Luis Castillo, and, provided he wins that, a possible move to junior welterweight, where any number of exciting fights await, particularly a rematch with Mayweather.

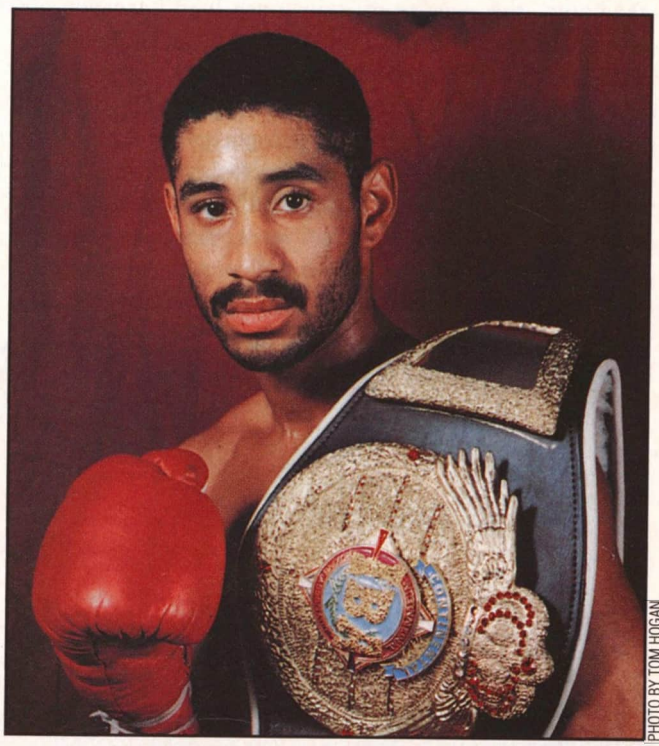


PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN

Report Card

Boxing Ability	B-
Power	A+
Defense	C
Ring Generalship	B+
Experience	B
Quality of Opposition	B
Chin	C+
Stamina	A+
Overall Grade	B

Diego Corrales' 10 Greatest Fights

By the 10th round, Corrales' eyes were dangerously swollen, and Castillo suddenly dropped him twice with left hooks. A solid punch or two from being stopped, Corrales hurt Castillo badly and trapped him on the ropes, forcing referee Tony Weeks to stop it at 2:06 of the 10th. It was magnificent.

1 KO 10 Joe Luis Castillo, May 7, 2005, Las Vegas, Nevada

No matter who you liked going in, there was no question that these were the world's two best lightweights. Castillo, the world champion, was coming off wins over Juan Lazcano, Joel Casamayor, and Julio Diaz; Corrales over Acelino Freitas and Casamayor. Opinion as to who held the edge was split between those who preferred Corrales' explosive punching power and those who liked Castillo for his strength and experience. Ultimately, neither side would be disappointed.

From the start, Corrales fought Castillo inside, giving up his advantages in height and reach. Over the first nine rounds he and Castillo repeatedly rocked one another with powerpunches, much to the delight of the 5,198 attendees at the Mandalay Bay.

Corrales lands a right while Castillo's counter is en route

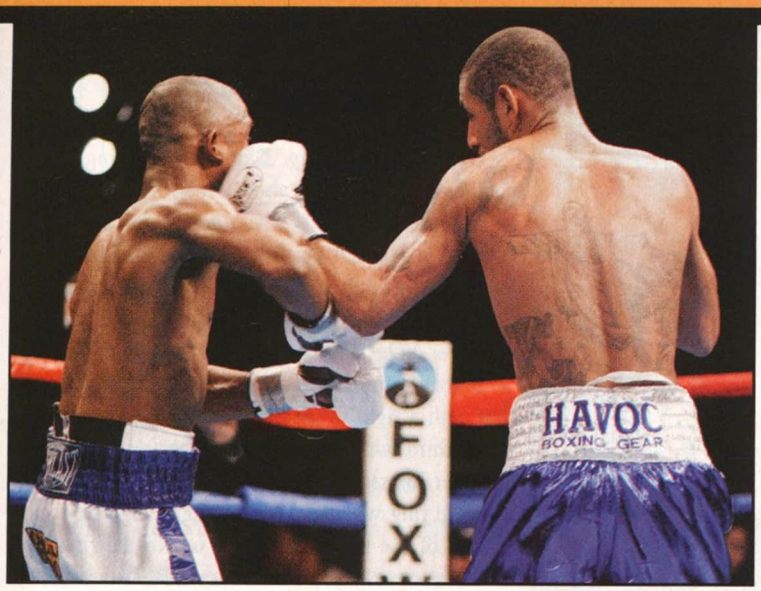
2 KO 3 Angel Manfredy, September 2, 2000, El Paso, Texas

There was as much talk going into this about Corrales' pending legal troubles as there was about the fight. Corrales was facing assault and battery charges stemming from an altercation with his pregnant wife in his hometown of Sacramento. The particularly disturbing nature of the charges seemed at alarming odds with Corrales' easygoing demeanor, and the question was whether the case would serve to distract the IBF junior lightweight titlist.

Manfredy couldn't be so lucky. With about 30 seconds left in the first round, Corrales put him on his back with a pair of left hooks. Manfredy made it out of the round and even got a little work done in the second, but Corrales was too big and hit too hard. In the third, a right hand-left hook combination forced Manfredy to take a knee, and moments after he regained his feet, a straight right floored him again. After a brutal barrage rendered Manfredy defenseless on the ropes, referee Jerry McKenzie stepped in at 2:38 of the round.

3 W 12 Joel Casamayor, March 6, 2004, Mashantucket, Connecticut

It was hard to pick Corrales here, even after he enlisted the services of Joe Goossen, formerly Casamayor's head trainer. In their first match, Casamayor had floored him twice and busted up his mouth enough to force a stoppage. Though the fight was dramatic and competitive—Corrales also scored a knockdown—Casamayor had effectively neutralized his punch. What could Corrales do differently this time?



Corrales creates havoc from the outside against Casamayor

Corrales could box. The crowd at Foxwoods Casino may not have liked it, but Corrales did what he had to; he stayed outside and used his height and reach to pick off Casamayor from a distance. He lost focus in the 10th, and Casamayor dropped him with a left, but his movement and jab were enough over the rest of the fight to get him a split decision win by scores of 113-114 and 115-112 (twice).

4 KO 10 Acelino Freitas, August 7, 2004, Mashantucket, Connecticut

While it's true that Freitas' star had faded due to some recent lackluster performances, this was a legitimate superfight between two very good lightweights. Freitas' inconsistency in major fights was due largely, in the minds of many, to the loss of his true ring identity as a puncher. With Corrales there was no ambiguity; he was going to knock you out or get beat trying.

True to recent form, the previously undefeated Freitas came out boxing, and for the first seven rounds he did well. He let Corrales come to him and countered with precision, drilling Corrales with overhand rights and hooks. But he tired from the pressure Corrales applied, and after the seventh it was all Corrales. He floored Freitas with booming combinations in both the eighth and ninth rounds, and following another knockdown in the 10th, Freitas told referee Michael Ortega that he'd had enough. "I was taking my time, biding my time," said Corrales. "We had our game plan." It worked perfectly.

5 KO 7 Roberto Garcia, October 23, 1999, Las Vegas, Nevada

There was no need for a publicist to find some novel way to market this fight. It was a straight-up puncher versus boxer. Like Corrales, Garcia was undefeated. And he had hand and foot speed to burn and enough moves to make any big puncher look foolish. He'd completely outboxed veteran Harold Warren to win the IBF junior welterweight title, and defended against Ramon Ledon and former titlist John-John Molina. Many thought he'd outbox Corrales too.

Over the first several rounds Garcia shone. He was too fast for Corrales and rocked him with a combination in the third. But a good puncher will catch up eventually, and Corrales did. He finally drilled Garcia in the sixth, flooring him twice. After another knockdown in the seventh, referee Joe Cortez stopped it at 0:48 of the round and Corrales was a beltholder. "I was nervous early," he said. "He jarred me in the third and woke me up. I've been dreaming of getting this title all my life."

6 KO 10 Justin Juuko, June 17, 2000, Los Angeles, California

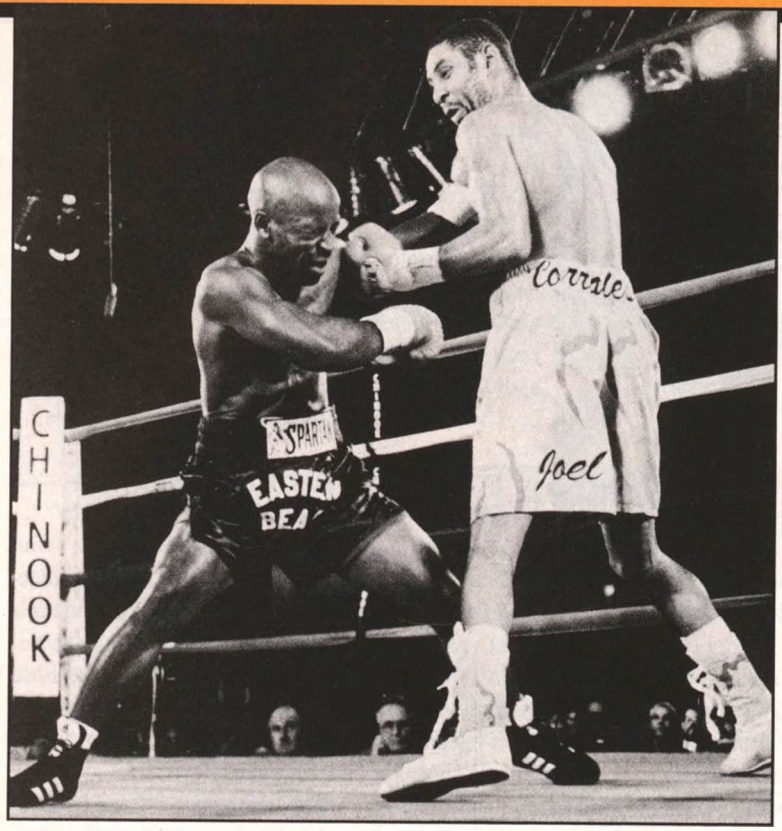
It's true that Juuko had already been thrashed a couple of times by the time Corrales got him in this non-title fight (Antonio Hernandez and Floyd Mayweather stopped him in 11 and nine rounds, respectively), but he still had something left. But he wasn't rated in the IBF's top 10, so, being the paragons of integrity they are, they refused to sanction the bout.

Juuko did all right. He hung in there. He was no match for Corrales' size and firepower, but he didn't back off and he made Corrales work for the victory. After flooring Juuko in the third, Corrales went to work wearing him down with jabs and hooks and constant pressure. The end came in the 10th with Corrales ahead by six points on two cards. The third judge had it even. "Juuko was much tougher than a lot of people thought," said Corrales.

7 W 12 John Brown, December 4, 1999, Lincoln City, Oregon

It may have looked ridiculous, the 6' Corrales against the 5'3" Brown, but this was an important match for several reasons. First, it was the first defense of the IBF junior lightweight title Corrales had won just six weeks earlier by stopping Roberto Garcia.

Freitas could ward off "Chico" for only so long



Corrales masterfully utilized his nine-inch height advantage over Brown

Second, Brown was a known tough guy; the previous April he'd gone into the eighth round against Shane Mosley at Mosley's lightweight peak. It was the only time he'd been stopped.

Corrales couldn't do what Mosley did, but he got the job done against one of the more durable guys in the business. He speared Brown throughout with long, teeth-rattling jabs and right hands and for the most part shut down Brown offensively. He nearly floored him with a one-two in the third, but settled for a controlled, methodical, and mature decision win. The scores were 117-111 and 116-112 (twice).

8 KO by 6 Joel Casamayor, October 4, 2003, Las Vegas, Nevada

The thing about great punchers is they're always in the fight. You're always aware that no matter how far behind they are or how deep into it they are, they could end things in the amount of time it takes to land a left hook or a right hand. That was the phenomenon one was reminded of while watching Corrales against Casamayor.

Corrales was behind. By the time the fight was stopped before the start of the seventh round because of several severe lacerations in his mouth, he'd been floored twice and generally outboxed. But he'd also dropped Casamayor and, importantly, had hurt him at the end of the sixth. Moreover, Casamayor had a point deducted for holding and hitting. It was still a close fight, Corrales was in it and every possibility existed that he could turn it around. "I had him hurt. I would have probably finished him off in this round. I mean he was hurt real bad," said Corrales.

9 KO 5 Michael Davis, January 25, 2003, Atlantic City, New Jersey

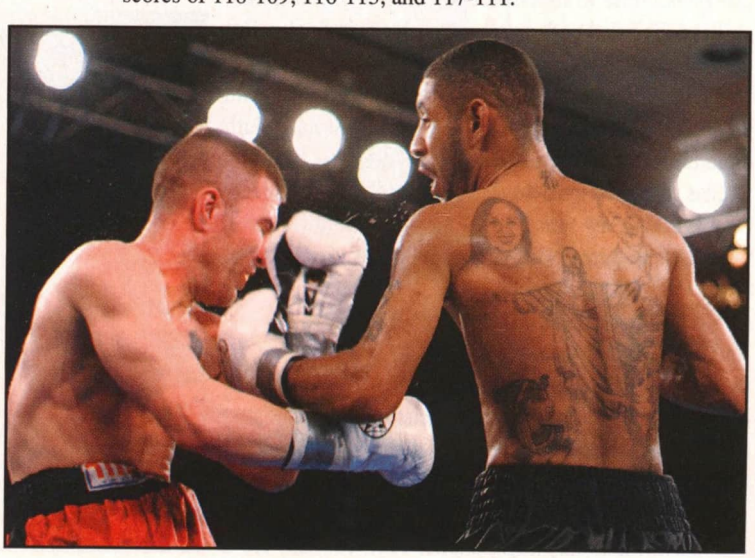
Don't get us wrong, Davis was nothing special and has been beaten by about every bigger-name guy he has faced. Still, this was a good win for Corrales because it marked his first fight in almost exactly two years, or since Mayweather dethroned him. It demonstrated that the hard time he did had no effect whatever on his ability to get things done in the ring.

Starting quickly, Corrales floored Davis in the first with a right to the body. He dropped him again in the third with a hook, and in the fourth opened a cut over his right eye. He was pounding Davis all over the ring when referee Lindsay Paige stopped it at 1:57 of the fifth. Two years out of the ring have ruined a lot of guys, but for Corrales, it was like he was never gone.

10 W 12 Gary St. Clair, December 18, 1998, Sacramento, California

You'd think a puncher's best fights would be all knockouts, right? After all, there are plenty to choose from. But decision wins for a puncher like Corrales are something like extra credit—they show he can go the full route when he has to and that's what Corrales showed in this IBF junior lightweight title eliminator. And don't be fooled; St. Clair was an undefeated prospect at the time.

Fighting in Yosemite Hall in his hometown, Corrales outboxed St. Clair from the start. Making the most of his six-inch height advantage, he jabbed frequently and scored well with sharp counter rights. St. Clair was in the fight, but just couldn't match Corrales' power or work rate. He just wasn't strong enough. He did well in the fourth, scoring a few sweeping overhand rights, but Corrales was never in trouble. He rocked St. Clair in the 11th and coasted in the 12th on the way to a unanimous decision victory by scores of 118-109, 116-113, and 117-111.



Corrales showed no ring rust against Davis

The Professional Record of Diego Corrales

1996		
March 19	Everett Berry, Tempe, AZ	KO 3
March 28	Enrique Beltran, Phoenix, AZ	W 4
May 30	Victor Manuel Mendoza, Phoenix	KO 3
June 7	Ciro Canales, Las Vegas, NV	W 4
June 27	Lorenzo Raul Chaires, Phoenix	KO 1
Aug. 17	Cesar Morales, Albuquerque, NM	KO 3
Sept. 13	Murphy Hughes, Des Moines, IA	KO 1
Oct. 11	Sergio Macías, Las Vegas	KO 4
Nov. 29	Juan Santos, Tijuana, Mexico	KO 1
Dec. 13	Mario Gonzalez, Tecate, Mexico	KO 1
Dec. 16	Julian Vasquez, Tijuana	KO 1
1997		
Jan. 10	Salvador Montes, Inglewood, CA	KO 1
March 14	Idelfonso Bernal, Phoenix	KO 2
April 4	Steve Quiñonez, Las Vegas	KO 4
May 9	Javier Pichardo, Las Vegas	KO 2
July 11	Manny Castillo, Sacramento, CA	KO 11
Aug. 22	Isagani Pumar, Sacramento	KO 8
Oct. 18	Juan Ángel Macías, Las Vegas	KO 6
Dec. 4	Angel Aldama, Sacramento	W 10
1998		
April 18	Juan Carlos Salazar, Los Angeles	KO 1
May 30	Eduardo Contreras, Los Angeles	KO 2
July 5	Benito Rodríguez, Indio, CA	Tech. Win 7
Aug. 15	Rafael Morfin, Las Vegas	KO 2
Sept. 12	Benito Rodríguez, Indio	KO 6
Nov. 20	Hector Arroyo, Las Vegas	KO 5
Dec. 18	Gairy St. Clair, Sacramento, CA	W 12
1999		
April 2	Claudio Víctor Martinet, Chattanooga, TN	KO 5
June 12	Angel Aldama, Indio, CA	KO 4
Oct. 23	Roberto Garcia, Las Vegas (Wins IBF Super Featherweight Title)	KO 7
Dec. 4	John Brown, Lincoln City, OR (Retains IBF Super Featherweight Title)	W 12
2000		
March 18	Derrick Gainer, Las Vegas (Retains IBF Super Featherweight Title)	KO 3
June 17	Justin Juuko, Los Angeles (Retains IBF Super Featherweight Title)	KO 10
Sept. 2	Angel Manfredy, El Paso, TX	KO 3
2001		
Jan. 20	Floyd Mayweather Jr., Las Vegas (For WBC Super Featherweight Title)	KO by 10
2003		
Jan. 25	Michael Davis, Atlantic City	KO 5
Feb. 22	Roque Cassiani, Memphis, TN	KO 1
April 24	Felix St. Kitts, Gulfport, MS	KO 3
June 20	Damian Fuller, Dominguez Hills, CA	KO 3
Oct. 4	Joel Casamayor, Las Vegas	KO by 6
2004		
March 6	Joel Casamayor, Mashantucket, CT	W 12
Aug. 7	Acelino Freitas, Mashantucket	KO 10
2005		
May 7	Jose Luis Castillo, Las Vegas (Wins World Lightweight Title)	KO 10

Chico was the man after a seventh-round kayo of Garcia

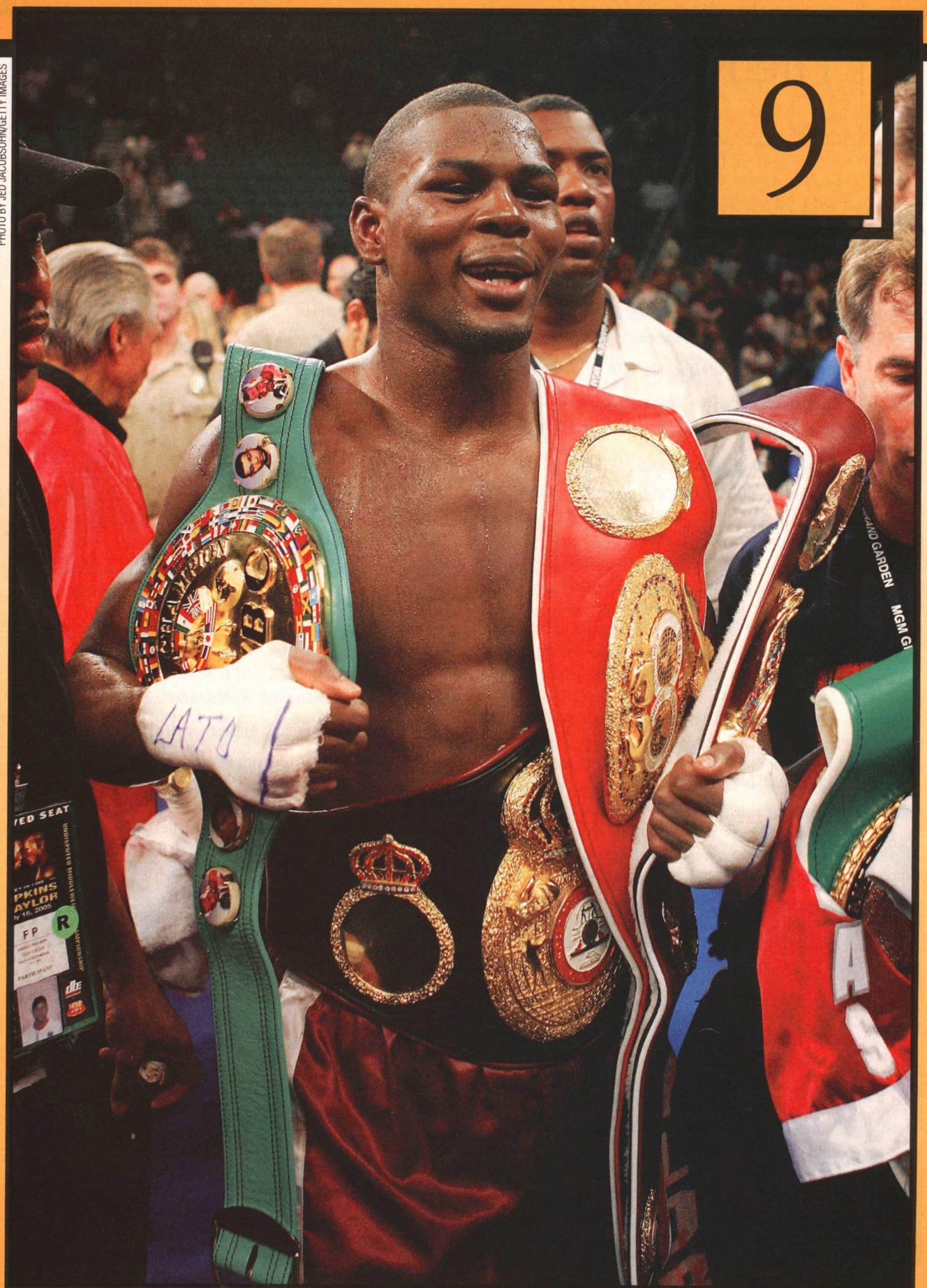

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PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Jermain Taylor

Birthdate: August 11, 1978

Birthplace: Little Rock, Arkansas

Residence: Little Rock, Arkansas

Weight: Middleweight

Height: 6'1"

Reach: 78"

Professional Record: 24-0 (17)

World Titles: World Middleweight (July 16, 2005-present)

Handlers: Mark Vaz, manager; Pat Burns, trainer

Background: Started boxing at the age of 13, and later became a track star at Little Rock's McClellan High School. Turned down scholarship offers to run track in college in order to stick with boxing. Won middleweight bronze at 2000 Olympics in Sydney, Australia, and then turned pro under promoter Lou DiBella in January 2001. Married to Erica Smith-Taylor, a former basketball standout at Louisiana Tech and now a member of the WNBA's Washington Mystics.

Style: Well-schooled, stand-up boxer with outstanding jab

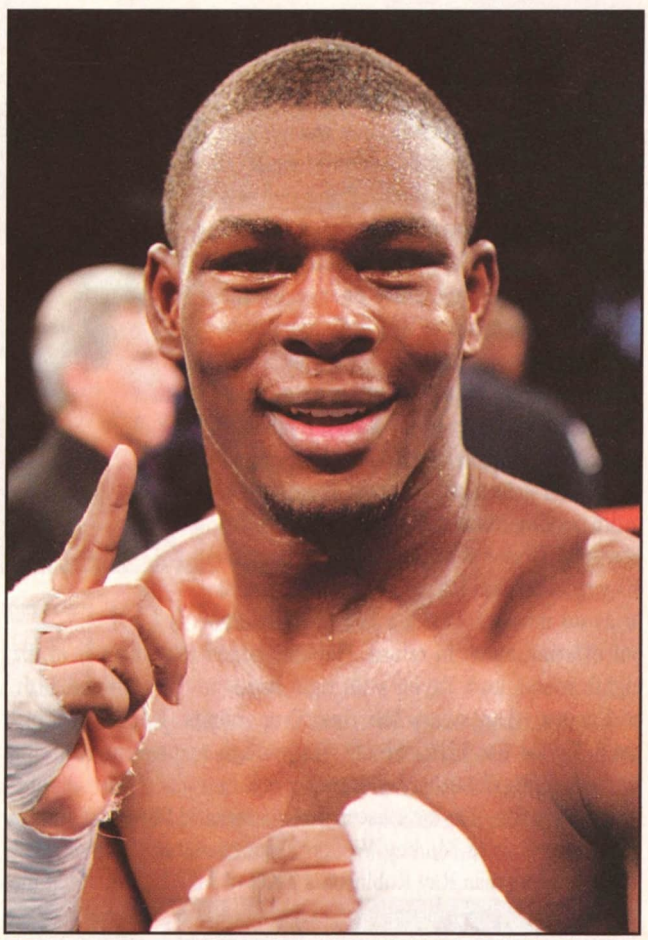
Strengths: Size, athleticism, youth, sound fundamentals, right-hand power

Weaknesses: Inexperience at top level, in-fighting skills, methodical approach

Best Performance: Overcame huge experience gap and late charge to take the world middleweight title from Bernard Hopkins via split decision in July 2005.

Worst Performance: Had to settle for an eight-round decision against journeyman Grady Brewer in June 2002. Brewer had lost three of his previous seven bouts, including TKO defeats to Kelly Pavlik and Efrain Garcia.

Future: Contractually mandated rematch with Hopkins should settle the controversy surrounding the decision in their first encounter



Report Card

Boxing Ability	B+
Power	B
Defense	B-
Ring Generalship	B
Experience	B-
Quality of Opposition	B
Chin	A
Stamina	B
Overall Grade	B

Jermain Taylor's 10 Greatest Fights

1 W 12 Bernard Hopkins, July 16, 2005, Las Vegas, Nevada

While it wasn't the decisive changing of the guard that Taylor had hoped for, the 2000 Olympic bronze medalist became the new undisputed middleweight champion by outworking Bernard Hopkins in the early rounds and then surviving a late charge by the defending champion to win a 12-round split decision. Judges Duane Ford and Paul Smith both scored the fight for Taylor by margins of 115-113, while judge Jerry Roth had Hopkins winning by a 116-112 tally.

The first half of the fight featured far more posing than punching, but the 26-year-old Taylor was more active than the 40-year-old Hopkins, who seemed content to avoid most of Taylor's big blows without offering much in return. Hopkins began to take over in the eighth round, hurt Taylor with right hands in the 10th and 11th, and appeared to sweep the final four rounds. But judge Ford gave Taylor the 12th, which was enough to prevent Hopkins from retaining the title on a draw.

Historically, Taylor's ascension to the middleweight throne was more akin to Mickey Walker's questionable decision over Tiger Flowers than Ray Robinson's TKO of Jake LaMotta, but the fact that he is the first to defeat Hopkins in more than 12 years cannot be discounted.

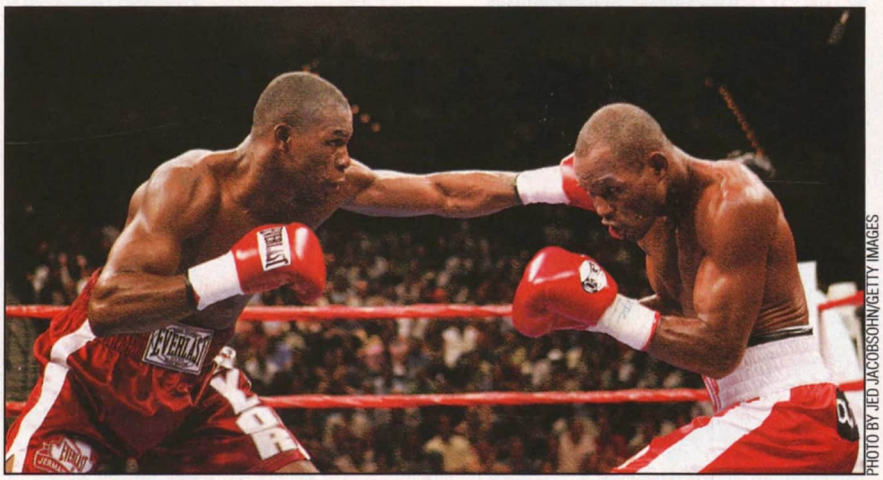


PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Taylor rams a long left into Hopkins' head

2 KO 3 Daniel Edouard, February 19, 2005, Los Angeles, California

In retrospect, it's easy to recall this as sly matchmaking; Taylor was bigger, stronger, more experienced and had fought many more times on a large stage. But Edouard was no pushover; he was undefeated too, and in his previous fight had won an exciting slugfest against Willie Gibbs, who also was undefeated. To some of us, this looked like what we had waited a long time to see: Taylor against another young, strong, middleweight.

That's not how Taylor made it look. After a back-and-forth first round, Taylor started landing bombs in the second. Midway through the round, he rocked Edouard with a left hook and hurt him badly at the end of the round with a right. Taylor's assault continued in the third, and about every punch he tried—hook, cross, uppercut—landed with good effect. Finally, a combination shook Edouard to his toes and sent him to the ropes, where Taylor assailed him until referee Ray Corona stopped it at 2:26 of the round.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Edouard runs into a Taylor left en route to third-round kayo loss

3 W 12 William Joppy, December 4, 2004, Little Rock, Arkansas

You certainly can make the case that Hopkins ruined Joppy before Taylor got anywhere near him. You could argue too that Felix Trinidad did it before Hopkins did. Whatever the case, we'll acknowledge that Joppy was a spent bullet by the time Taylor beat him up over the distance. He looked shot almost from the first round here, but then, having a jab shoved down your throat will make a lot of guys look that way.

Taylor dominated from the opening bell, backing up Joppy with jabs and hammering him to the body. He was much stronger than Joppy and far more focused. Joppy couldn't get much offense going over the first half of the fight, and after getting floored by a left hook in the fifth, he stopped trying. He spent the last several rounds in full-on survival mode and never came close to threatening Taylor. The scores were appropriately lopsided: 120-107 (three times).

4 KO 9 Raul Marquez, June 19, 2004, Carson, California

You couldn't blame Marquez for thinking he was onto something taking this fight. Being away from world-class competition for a long time makes fighters a little delusional. It was Shane Mosley's job to remind Marquez, a former IBF junior middleweight titleholder, of his limitations when he and Marquez met in February 2003. But when that fight ended in a three-round no-contest, Marquez was permitted to continue the fantasy. Taylor ended it.

Advancing behind a thudding left jab, Taylor pushed Marquez back from the outset. He was too big and strong and repeatedly banged home two- and three-punch combinations that disconcerted Marquez. The intensity of Taylor's attack, which was compromised not in the least by Marquez' southpaw stance, it should be noted, yielded an important advantage: It completely handcuffed Marquez. Consumed with defending himself, Marquez had neither time nor inclination to punch back, and after nine rounds of serving as Taylor's personal punching bag, he said to hell with it and sat on his stool. He re-retired from the sport immediately afterward.

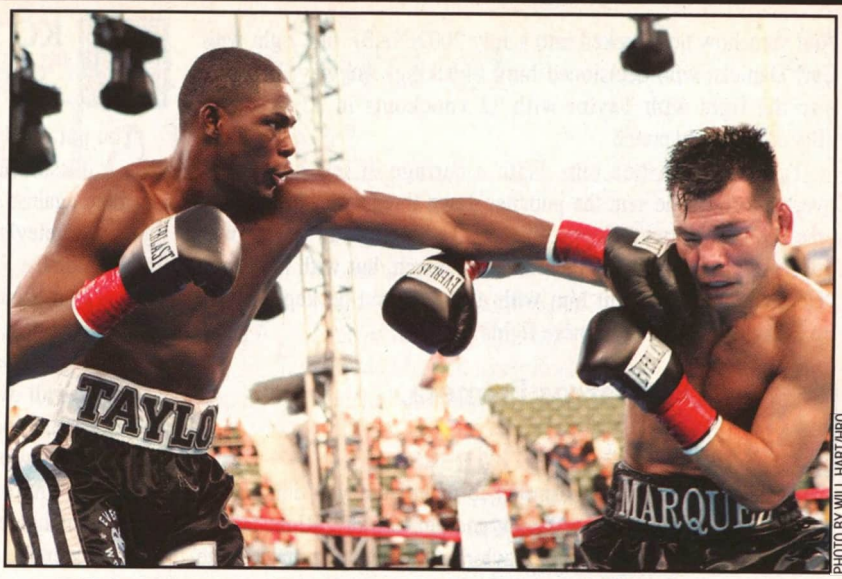


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Taylor tags former IBF junior middleweight titleholder Raul Marquez with a left

5 KO 7 Alex Bunema, March 27, 2004, Little Rock, Arkansas

Taylor's detractors made the case loudly that Bunema was two things: past his better days and really just a junior middleweight. They were one for two; Bunema was indeed a natural 154-pounder and had fought at that weight for about four years. So Taylor outsized him. But he was hardly used up. He'd gone 5-1-1 in his last seven, with the loss a split decision to Bronco McKart. His only other losses were to Kassim Ouma and Anthony Jones.

Taylor was stronger. That was expected. But he was also just better than Bunema. His jab pounded Bunema's jaw throughout. He was faster. His combinations were harder, more fluid, and more frequent. It wouldn't have mattered if Bunema were a middleweight. It might not have mattered if he were a light heavyweight. Taylor was just better. He battered Bunema and in the seventh dropped him with a seven-punch volley. He sent him down again moments later, convincing referee Robert Gonzalez to stop it at 2:17 of the round.

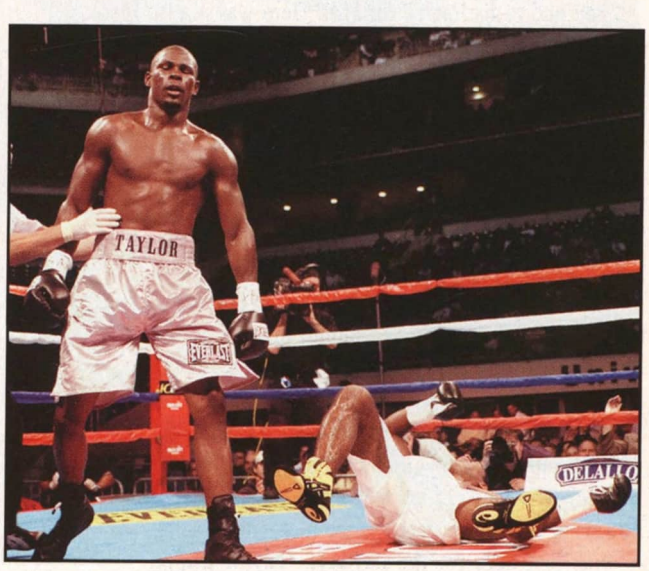
6 W 12 Freddie Cuevas, August 8, 2003, Little Rock, Arkansas

No matter how good a puncher a guy is, eventually he meets someone he can't take out. If he's lucky, it happens to him on his way up. If it doesn't, he doesn't know how to handle it when it happens later on. It's better that he learns early and better still if he handles it right: doesn't lose focus, doesn't flame out, and takes care of business. That's what Taylor did here against a very tough guy. Despite having five losses coming into the fight, Cuevas had never been stopped.

Taylor didn't stop him either, but he won by three scores of 120-108, which is about as one-sided as a distance fight can be. Fighting in front of an adoring hometown crowd, Taylor used his three-inch height advantage and his greater athleticism to keep Cuevas, who looked stubby next to him, outside. From that position he scored with as many jabs, hooks, and right hands as he wanted, and did everything but put Cuevas out.

7 KO 4 Nicolas Cervera, May 17, 2003, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

You could say this about Cervera: He could punch. He didn't have wins over anyone you've heard of unless you live in Colombia and are a little too into the fight game. And even there when he stepped up, he was beaten, by Regino Casseres, and later by Rafael Pineda. He did beat Casseres in a rematch, however.



Nicolas Cervera goes down and out in the fourth round

And somehow he'd lucked into a July 2002 NABF title fight with Carl Daniels, who decisioned him. Shocking. Anyway, he came into the fight with Taylor with 32 knockouts in 35 wins. So "Bazooka" could punch.

Taylor demolished him. With a barrage of left hooks and overhand rights he sent the puncher down three times before referee Rich Steigerwalt stopped it at 2:37 of the fourth. Taylor was impressed not so much with Cervera's punch, but with his heart. "He came to fight. I hit him with all I had and he kept getting up," Taylor said. "I need more fights like this."

8 KO 5 Marcos Primera, March 31, 2003, Little Rock, Arkansas

Most of the time, the best way to make sure you don't get a shot at a hot prospect is to knock another one off. Right before facing Taylor, Primera stopped Taylor's Olympic teammate Dante Craig in four rounds. You'd think Taylor's people would have run the other way. Not this time. They took on Primera, again in Taylor's hometown at the Statehouse Convention Center, and it was never close.

After jabbing Primera's face numb in the first and second, Taylor started to unload in the third. Primera was right there to take it. With 35 seconds left in the fourth, a Taylor uppercut followed by a combination put Primera down. A counter hook dropped him again in the fifth, and that was enough for him, a signal read clearly by referee Elmo Adolph, who stopped counting at three. Taylor gave himself a grade of B afterward, but had higher marks for the crowd: "Arkansas loves me and I love Arkansas," he said. "It's beautiful fighting at home."

9 W 10 Sam Hill, August 17, 2002, Atlantic City, New Jersey

You had to feel sorry for Hill. Here was a guy who had been a so-so pro all of his career, never in big, high-pressure fight, puttering contentedly along until he signs for a fight with former alphabet titlist David Reid, who is beyond shot. He finally has fun in a fight, beats the heck out of Reid, and what's his reward? A fight with Taylor, who is bigger, stronger, better, and the exact opposite of shot.

It should have surprised no one when Hill came out and didn't move his hands until picking up the check after the fight. What did you expect? He knew better than anyone that a win over Reid in no way qualified him to be in there against Taylor. So did the judges, who quite correctly scored it a shutout. Hill had no answer for Taylor's speed, power, or his commitment to the moment. "I think he was just here for the payday," Taylor griped afterward. Well, duh.

10 KO 7 Rogelio Martinez, November 8, 2003, Las Vegas, Nevada

You put a kid on a big stage to see what he can do under pressure. It doesn't have to be against a killer opponent. You put him out there against anyone just to see how he handles the crowd, the lights, the television cameras, being around world-class fighters. This was on the Roy Jones-Antonio Tarver I card. That's pretty Big Time. Taylor handled it fine.

Martinez was durable. Tough. But he could have used some size and firepower here because that's what Taylor had over him. Taylor was all over him from early on, blasting him with that ball bat of a jab, knocking him back with right crosses and sweeping left hooks. It was another one of those nights when Taylor could do about whatever he wanted to; his advantages in size and strength mandated it. So he manhandled poor Martinez and beat him all over the ring until Martinez' corner stopped it at 1:42 of the seventh round.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Taylor's jab finds at crouching Rogelio Martinez

The Professional Record of Jermain Taylor

2001		
Jan. 27	Chris Walsh, New York City	KO 4
April 7	Kenny Stubbs, Las Vegas	KO 2
May 8	Antonio Baker, Pittsburgh, PA	W 4
June 23	Marvin Smith, Las Vegas	W 4
Aug. 11	Efrain Garcia, Little Rock, AR	KO 5
Nov. 2	Dave Hamilton, Ledyard, CT	KO 2
Nov. 23	Undra White, New York City	KO 4
2002		
March 15	Ron Carnell, Tulsa, OK	KO 3
April 27	Joe Garcia, New York City	KO 6
June 15	Grady Brewer, Miami, FL	W 8
Aug. 17	Sam Hill, Atlantic City	W 10
Nov. 9	Johnny Rivera, Chester, WV	KO 4
Dec. 20	Keith Sims, Tulsa	KO 1
2003		
Jan. 30	Lionel Ortiz, Miami	KO 2
March 31	Marcos Primera, Little Rock	KO 5
May 17	Nicolas Cervera, Pittsburgh	KO 4
Aug. 8	Alfredo Cuevas, Little Rock	W 12
Nov. 8	Rogelio Martinez, Las Vegas	KO 7
2004		
Jan. 9	Alex Rios, Uncasville, CT	KO 1
March 27	Alex Bunema, Little Rock	KO 7
June 19	Raul Marquez, Los Angeles	KO 9
Dec. 4	William Joppy, Little Rock	W 12
2005		
Feb. 19	Daniel Edouard, Los Angeles	KO 3
July 16	Bernard Hopkins (Wins World Middleweight Title)	W 12

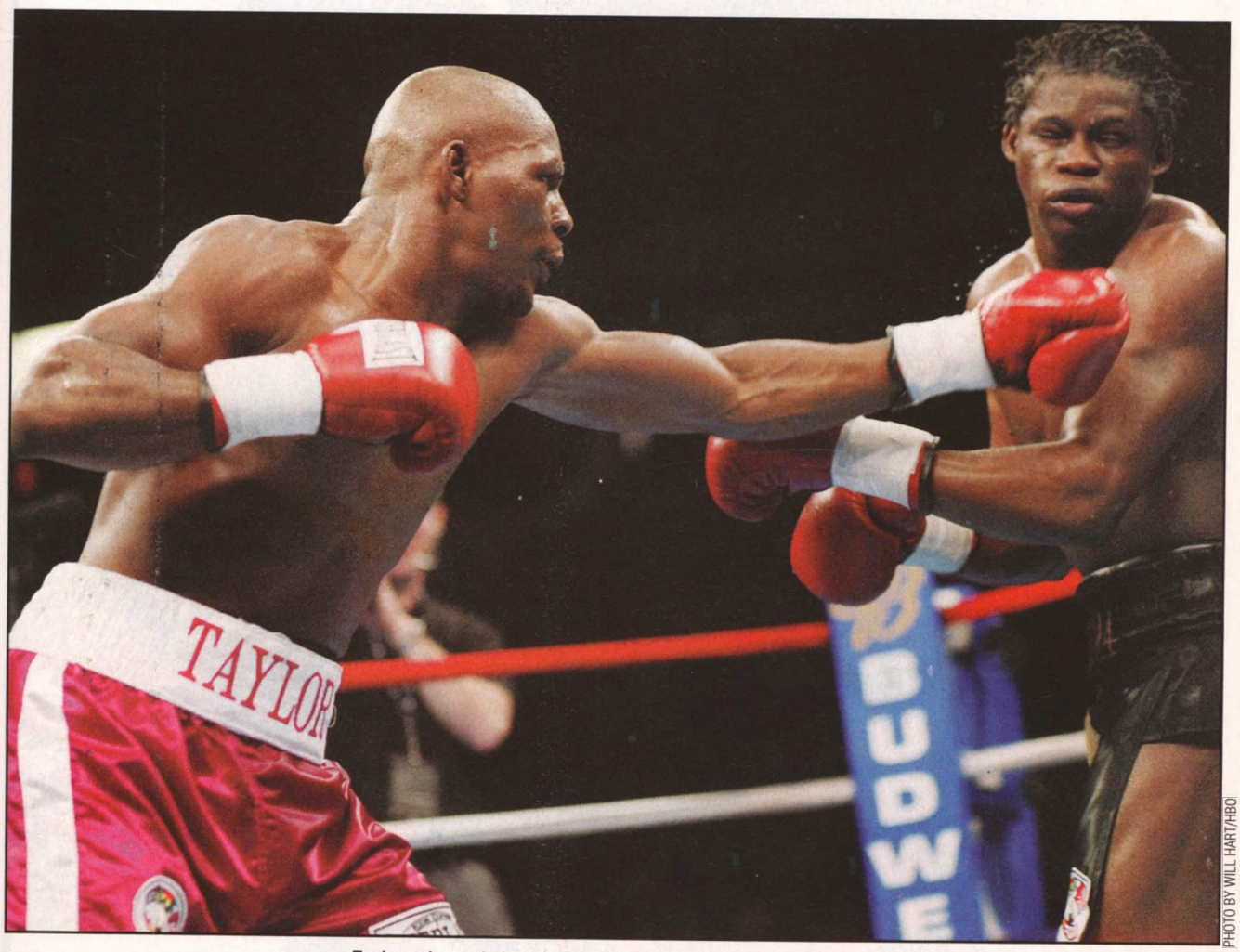


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Taylor only needed seven round to dispose of tough Alex Bunema

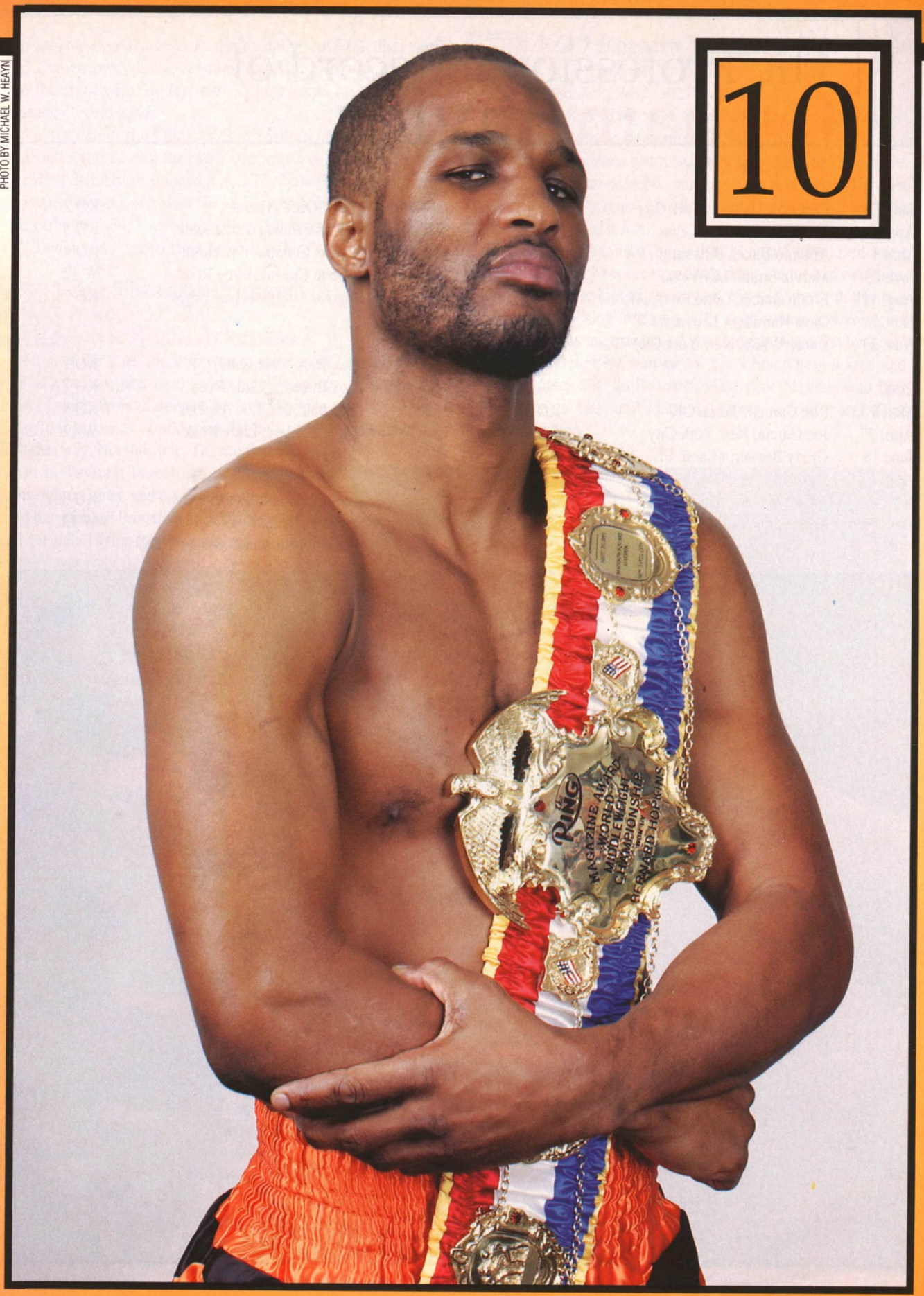


PHOTO BY MICHAEL W. HEAYN

Bernard Hopkins

Birthdate: January 15, 1965

Birthplace: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Residence: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Weight Class: Middleweight

Height: 6'1"

Reach: 75"

Professional Record: 46-3-1 (32) with 1 no-contest

World Titles: IBF middleweight (April 29, 1995-present), WBC middleweight (April 14, 2001-present), World middleweight (September 29, 2001-July 16, 2005)

Handlers: Self-managed; Bouie Fisher, trainer

Background: Grew up in depressed North Philadelphia neighborhood where street crime was a way of life. At 17 was arrested, convicted, and sentenced to prison for a period of up to 18 years. Boxed while incarcerated and committed himself to turning his life around. Was released in 1988 at the age of 23. Turned pro later that year as a light heavyweight and lost a decision to Clinton Mitchell. After layoff, hired Bouie Fisher as head trainer and reeled off 19 straight wins. In first try at world title, was decisioned by Roy Jones. Later drew with Segundo Mercado for vacant IBF title, then stopped Mercado in return to claim belt. Has since made division-record 20 title defenses and is riding 25-bout unbeaten streak.

Style: Depending on opponent, is a patient, methodical counterpuncher, or a rough, physical in-fighter

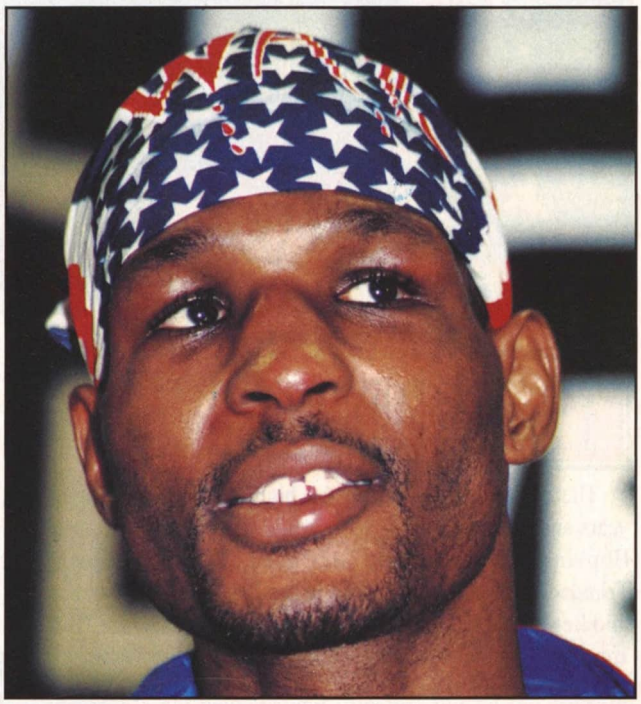
Strengths: Intelligence, patience, adaptability, willfulness

Weaknesses: Age, mediocre foot speed

Best Performance: Turned in inspired performance in biggest fight of his career, dismantling and stopping Felix Trinidad in the 12th round of their September 2001 superfight at Madison Square Garden.

Worst Performance: Was floored twice, hurt several times, and held to a draw by ordinary Segundo Mercado in December 1994 fight for the vacant IBF middleweight title in Ecuador.

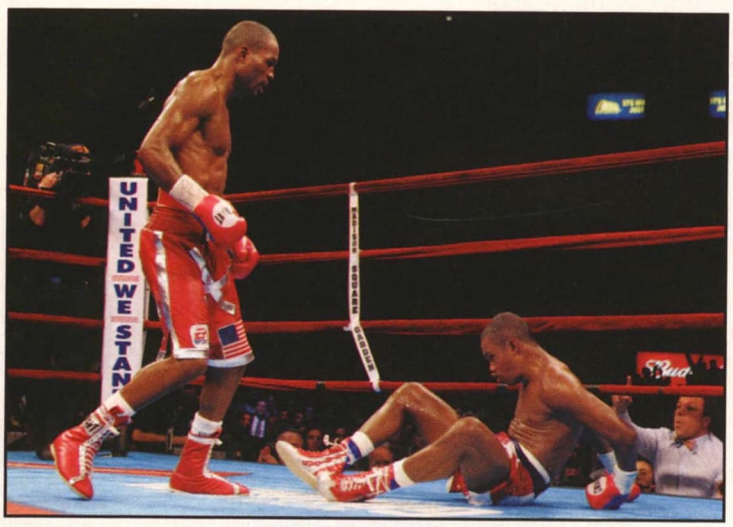
Future: Before losing to Jermain Taylor, he said he wanted to wind up his career with a fight against either Roy Jones or Felix Trinidad, both of whom are technically retired at this writing. A rematch against Taylor is now his top priority.



Report Card

Boxing Ability	A
Power	B+
Defense	A-
Ring Generalship	A-
Experience	A+
Quality of Opposition	A-
Chin	A
Stamina	A+
Overall Grade	A-

Bernard Hopkins' 10 Greatest Fights



Hopkins admires his work against Trinidad

1 KO 12 Felix Trinidad, September 29, 2001, New York, New York

The consensus going into the biggest middleweight fight in years and the final in Don King's middleweight tourney was that Hopkins, a 3-1 underdog, was good. Very good, even. But Trinidad was great. You could argue that Trinidad was barely a middleweight, having fought at the weight just once. But that appearance, a startling demolition of WBA titlist William Joppy in the tourney's semifinal, more than outshone Hopkins' semifinal win, a punch-and-clutch decision over Keith Holmes.

When it got underway in Madison Square Garden, we learned there were two great fighters in there. Using smart movement and a stiff left jab, Hopkins outboxed and outsmarted Trinidad from the outset, stepping to his left whenever Trinidad set to punch. He countered with right crosses and kept Trinidad off-balance while breaking him down. Then, proving he was no Oscar De La Hoya, Hopkins went for the kill in the 12th round, dropping Trinidad hard with a right hand, prompting Trinidad's father to throw in the towel.

2 KO 8 Oscar De La Hoya, September 18, 2004, Las Vegas, Nevada

This was the fight Hopkins was waiting all his life for. He was already wealthy by most standards and, at long last, respected by the fight community. But a mega-payday in a genuine superfight was what he always wanted, and this qualified. On this one he could retire if he wanted. It hardly mattered that in De La Hoya's lone middleweight appearance "The Golden Boy" was awful.

It was a better De La Hoya that met Hopkins in front of 16,000 fans in the MGM Grand Garden arena, and over the first four rounds he held his own. But Hopkins, who was making his 19th title defense, started closing the gap and by the sixth and seventh De La Hoya was in full retreat. He was taking a good beating in the ninth when Hopkins stepped in with a left hook to the body that ended it at 1:38. "I heard the wind come out of him," Hopkins said. "He fought a smart fight up until the end."

3 W 12 William Joppy, December 13, 2003, Atlantic City, New Jersey

So what that it came later than we wanted. This was the fight a lot of us wanted to see back when Hopkins and Joppy were the two best 160-pounders in the world, and not necessarily in that order. A few of us thought back then that Joppy's legs could give Hopkins trouble. But that was before Hopkins had notched his gazillionth title defense, before Felix Trinidad had handed Joppy's head to him. Oh well. Better late than never.

This started out bad for Joppy and got worse. Somewhere he'd lost the legs that had made him one of the game's better movers, and, forced to fight Hopkins inside, he was ground up. Hopkins was too strong and too rough in close, and by the end of 12 rounds, Joppy's face was unrecognizable to those in the Boardwalk Hall. The good news? He'd bet Hopkins $50,000 that

De La Hoya faded quickly after a good start

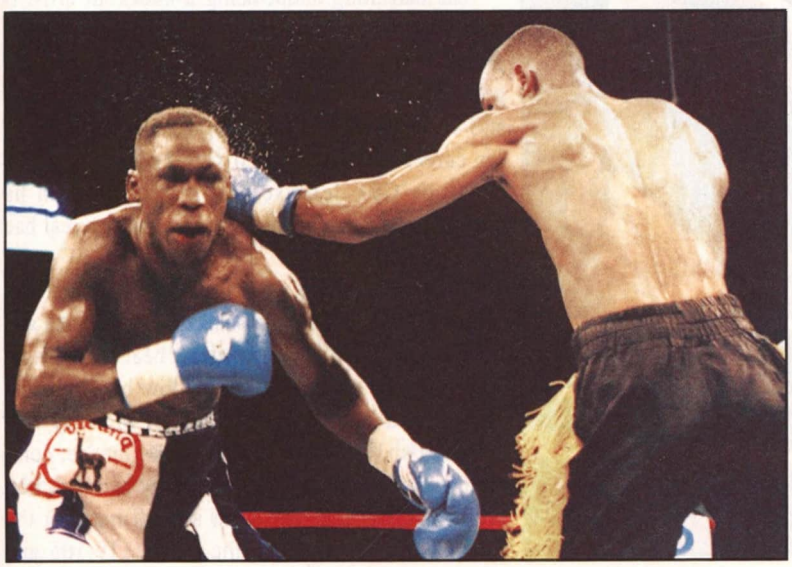
Joppy went the distance, but took a pounding

he'd last the distance. "He's got my respect, man, and that 50 was well-earned," said Hopkins.

4 KO 7 Segundo Mercado, April 29, 1995, Landover, Maryland

You can't give a guy like Hopkins a second chance against you, but that's what Mercado did here (certainly not by choice, however). In their first fight for the IBF title, which had taken place in Ecuador, Mercado had dumped Hopkins twice, been floored himself a couple of times, and hung on late for a draw. This time, on Hopkins' turf more or less, things would be different.

For the first couple of rounds Mercado did as well as he'd done in Ecuador, firing good hard shots inside Hopkins' hooks and overhand rights. But Hopkins hurt him in the third, and even when Mercado tried to swing the momentum back his way by repeatedly hitting Hopkins low, Hopkins stayed in there and fired powershots down the alley. From the fifth until referee Rudy Battle stopped it in the seventh, Mercado took a horrific beating, eating Hopkins' straight rights one after another. He never contended again.



Hopkins stopped Mercado in the rematch

5 KO 4 Joe Lipsey, March 16, 1996, Las Vegas, Nevada

Hopkins' second title defense was on a large stage; it was televised on ABC's *Wide World Of Sports* and later that evening Mike Tyson would regain the WBC heavyweight crown from Frank Bruno. Lipsey was rather an unknown commodity. Although undefeated in 25 fights, he hadn't fought anyone of note, but to be honest, we didn't know all that much about Hopkins at that point either. We would soon.

By the second round Hopkins was landing short rights inside that took Lipsey's heart out of the fight and had him fuzzy-brained already. The southpaw couldn't get out of the way of Hopkins' right hands, and in the third took a bad beating that set him up for the kayo. In the fourth, a straight right hurt Lipsey and a booming right uppercut straightened him up. Hopkins followed with a pair of crashing rights that not only put Lipsey down and out, but ended his career.

6 KO 11 Glen Johnson, July 20, 1997, Indio, California

Johnson was a long way yet from the guy who eventually would enjoy a stay at the top of the light heavyweight division, but all the elements we'd seen then were there when he took on Hopkins—the endurance, the chin, the resolve. The problem for him was Hopkins had all those things too, plus a lot more.

It started going bad for Johnson in the second when Hopkins buzzed him with a left uppercut and it never got any better. Johnson's game even then was on the inside, but Hopkins was better there, pounding his body and landing sharp uppercuts. And by the middle rounds it was clear that it wasn't Hopkins slowing down from the pace, it was Johnson. He hurt Johnson in the eighth and ninth rounds, and when he wobbled him in the in the 11th, referee Pat Russell stopped it at 1:23. "If I had laxed up one minute in my training and my discipline, he'd be champion today," Hopkins said later.

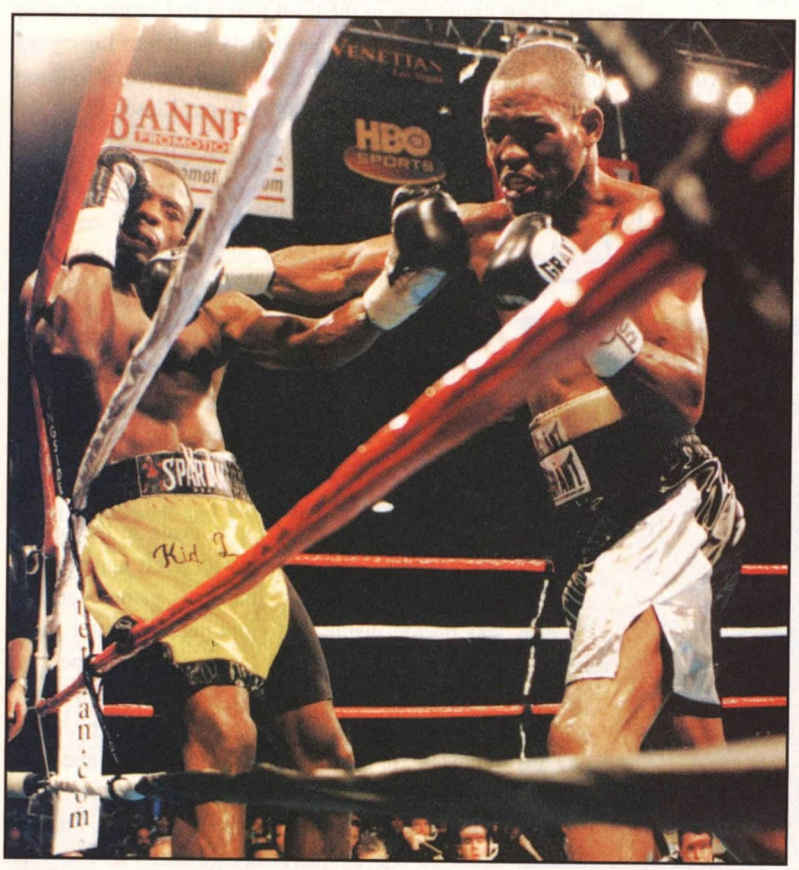
7 KO 7 Robert Allen, February 6, 1999, Washington, D.C.

If you didn't know better, you might have thought that Hopkins had dogged it in the first fight between these two. That was the night Allen was holding his own with Hopkins, maybe better than that, and Mills Lane somehow sent Hopkins spinning out of the ring. They said he sprained his leg and ruled it a no-contest, but if you were a cynic, you looked at it, saw how well Allen was doing, and concluded Hopkins knew it wasn't his night and took the smart way out. Hey, it could happen.

Wrong. Hopkins proved in the rematch to be better in every way. He floored Allen in the second and sixth rounds, and in between Allen tried to cry his way to a disqualification win. Twice in the fourth he went down from soft punches below the belt and then again from a gentle breeze near the round's end. Finally, a volley of straight, hard blows from Hopkins prompted referee Rudy Battle to stop it at 1:18 of the seventh.

8 KO 10 Antwun Echols, December 1, 2000, Las Vegas, Nevada

Hopkins prides himself on how far removed he is from the street thug who did hard time, but a fighter needs some of that stuff. Hopkins needed it in his rematch with the highly rated Echols, a hard-slugging street kid himself, especially when Echols bodyslammed him in the sixth round of their foul-filled rematch, injuring Hopkins' shoulder.



Echols is pummled by "The Executioner"

When the smoke cleared, Hopkins, who had been fouling Echols too throughout, had a choice: He could quit and win by disqualification (and no one would blame him) or he could show Echols how they did it in Philly. He chose the latter, boxing smartly over the next couple rounds and outlasting the far less committed challenger. Hopkins made his 12th title defense official when he hurt Echols with a right in the 10th and then pummeled him with a series of hooks until Tony Weeks stopped it at 1:42 of the round. "Great champions don't quit," Hopkins said later.

9 W 12 Antwun Echols, December 12, 1999, Miami, Florida

Young, strong challengers usually give 34-year-old champions trouble, and even though Hopkins won this by a wide margin to notch his 10th title defense, Echols had his moments. His best came in the second when he and Hopkins were breaking from a clinch and Echols launched an overhand right that thudded against Hopkins' jaw. Down went the champion, though referee Frank Santore ruled it no knockdown and gave Hopkins time to recover. Hopkins was rocked again in the last round.

But in every round in between, Hopkins showed that the transformation he'd undergone from young, swarming, right-hand puncher to older, expert boxer-puncher was complete. He jabbed Echols expertly and time and again shook him with straight, crisp, right-hand counters. The crowd at Miccosukee Indian Gaming would have preferred a brawl, but that wasn't Hopkins' plan this night. "I showed the world how I can back up and beat you like Sugar Ray Robinson and Willie Pep," he said, after winning by scores of 119-109 ands 118-110 (twice).

10 W 12 Andrew Council, November 18, 1997, Upper Marlboro, Maryland

The bad thing about being a knockout artist is you never learn how to go the distance. That's probably what Council thought gave him the edge going into this. And while it was true that Hopkins still was something of a kayo artist at this stage of his career—he had scored five knockouts in his previous five defenses—that didn't mean he couldn't be just as happy beating a guy up real bad for 36 minutes.

That's essentially what happened. Council had his moments; he landed his share of left hooks and in the third nailed Hopkins with a beauty of a right hand. And he matched Hopkins low blow for low blow. But a fighter who was better in every way beat him up. Hopkins outworked him inside, completely outboxed him from distance, and sent him reeling across the ring with a right hand in the seventh. The scores told the story: 119-105 and 118-106 (twice).

The Professional Record of Bernard Hopkins

1988		
Oct. 11	Clinton Mitchell, Atlantic City	L 4
1990		
Feb. 22	Greg Paige, Philadelphia	W 4
April 26	Keith Gray, Philadelphia	KO 1
May 18	Ed Tyler, Atlantic City	KO 1
May 31	Jouvin Mercado, Rochester, NY	KO 2
June 30	Khalif Shabazz, Atlantic City	KO 1
Aug. 5	Percy Harris, Atlantic City	W 6
Oct. 20	Darrin Oliver, Atlantic City	KO 1
Nov. 17	Mike Sapp, Fort Myers, FL	KO 1
1991		
Feb. 26	Richard Quiles, Philadelphia	KO 1
March 18	Steve Langley, Las Vegas	KO 3
June 20	Pedro Marquez, Parsippany, NJ	KO 1
July 9	Danny Mitchell, Philadelphia	KO 1
Sept. 23	Ralph Moncrief, Philadelphia	KO 1
Nov. 26	David McCluskey, Philadelphia	KO 5
Dec. 13	Willie Kemp, Atlantic City	W 10
1992		
Jan. 31	Dennis Milton, Philadelphia	KO 4
April 3	Randy Smith, Atlantic City	W 10
May 21	Anibal Miranda, Paris	W 10
Aug. 28	James Stokes, Atlantic City	KO 1
Sept. 14	Eric Rhinehart, Philadelphia	KO 1
Dec. 4	Wayne Powell, Atlantic City	KO 1
1993		
Feb. 16	Gilbert Baptist, Denver	W 12
May 22	Roy Jones, Washington, D.C. (For Vacant IBF Middleweight Title)	L 12
Aug. 3	Roy Ritchie, Las Vegas	KO 7
Nov. 23	Wendall Hall, Philadelphia	KO 3
1994		
Feb. 26	Melvin Wynn, Atlantic City	KO 3
May 17	Lupe Aquino, Atlantic City	W 12
Dec. 17	Segundo Mercado, Quito, Ecuador (For Vacant IBF Middleweight Title)	D 12
1995		
April 29	Segundo Mercado, Landover, MD (Wins Vacant IBF Middleweight Title)	KO 7
1996		
Jan. 27	Steve Frank, Phoenix (Retains IBF Middleweight Title)	KO 1
March 16	Joe Lipsey, Las Vegas (Retains IBF Middleweight Title)	KO 4
July 16	Bo James, Atlantic City (Retains IBF Middleweight Title)	KO 11
1997		
April 19	John David Jackson, Shreveport, LA (Retains IBF Middleweight Title)	KO 7
July 20	Glen Johnson, Indio, CA (Retains IBF Middleweight Title)	KO 11
Nov. 18	Andrew Council, Upper Marlboro, MD (Retains IBF Middleweight Title)	W 12
1998		
Jan. 31	Simon Brown, Atlantic City (Retains IBF Middleweight Title)	KO 6
Aug. 28	Robert Allen, Las Vegas (Retains IBF Middleweight Title)	No-Contest 4
1999		
Feb. 6	Robert Allen, Washington, D.C. (Retains IBF Middleweight Title)	KO 7
Dec. 12	Antwun Echols, Miami, FL (Retains IBF Middleweight Title)	W 12
2000		
May 13	Syd Vanderpool, Indianapolis (Retains IBF Middleweight Title)	W 12
Dec. 1	Antwun Echols, Las Vegas (Retains IBF Middleweight Title)	KO 10
2001		
April 14	Keith Holmes, New York City (Retains IBF Middleweight Title; Wins WBC Middleweight Title)	W 12
Sept. 29	Felix Trinidad, New York City (Unifies Middleweight Title)	KO 12
2002		
Feb. 2	Carl Daniels, Reading, PA (Retains World Middleweight Title)	KO 10
2003		
March 29	Morrade Hakkar, Philadelphia (Retains World Middleweight Title)	KO 8
Dec. 13	William Joppy, Atlantic City (Retains World Middleweight Title)	W 12
2004		
June 5	Robert Allen, Las Vegas (Retains World Middleweight Title)	W 12
Sept. 18	Oscar De La Hoya, Las Vegas (Retains World Middleweight Title)	KO 9
2005		
Feb. 19	Howard Eastman, Los Angeles, CA (Retains World Middleweight Title)	W 12
July 16	Jermain Taylor, Las Vegas (Loses World Middleweight Title)	L 12

TOO MUCH DISCRETION, NOT ENOUGH VALOR

Analyzing The Recent Trend Of Hitters Becoming Quitters

By Eric Raskin

Imagine how the course of boxing history would have been changed if every fighter had a little dog in him: Joe Louis, falling behind and growing frustrated, waves his glove and says he's had enough early in the 13th round against Billy Conn, ending his title defense streak at 17; Tony Zale, taking a terrible beating in his first fight with Rocky Graziano, elects to stay on his stool after round five, stifling demand for a rematch (in which, had it happened, Graziano, would have stayed on *his* stool after the fifth); Ray Leonard, discouraged rather than motivated when Angelo Dundee tells him, "You're blowin' it, son!", surrenders against Tommy Hearns, proving correct all the naysayers who claimed Sugar Ray was too pretty and fragile for this game; Buster Douglas, dropped heavily in the eighth round

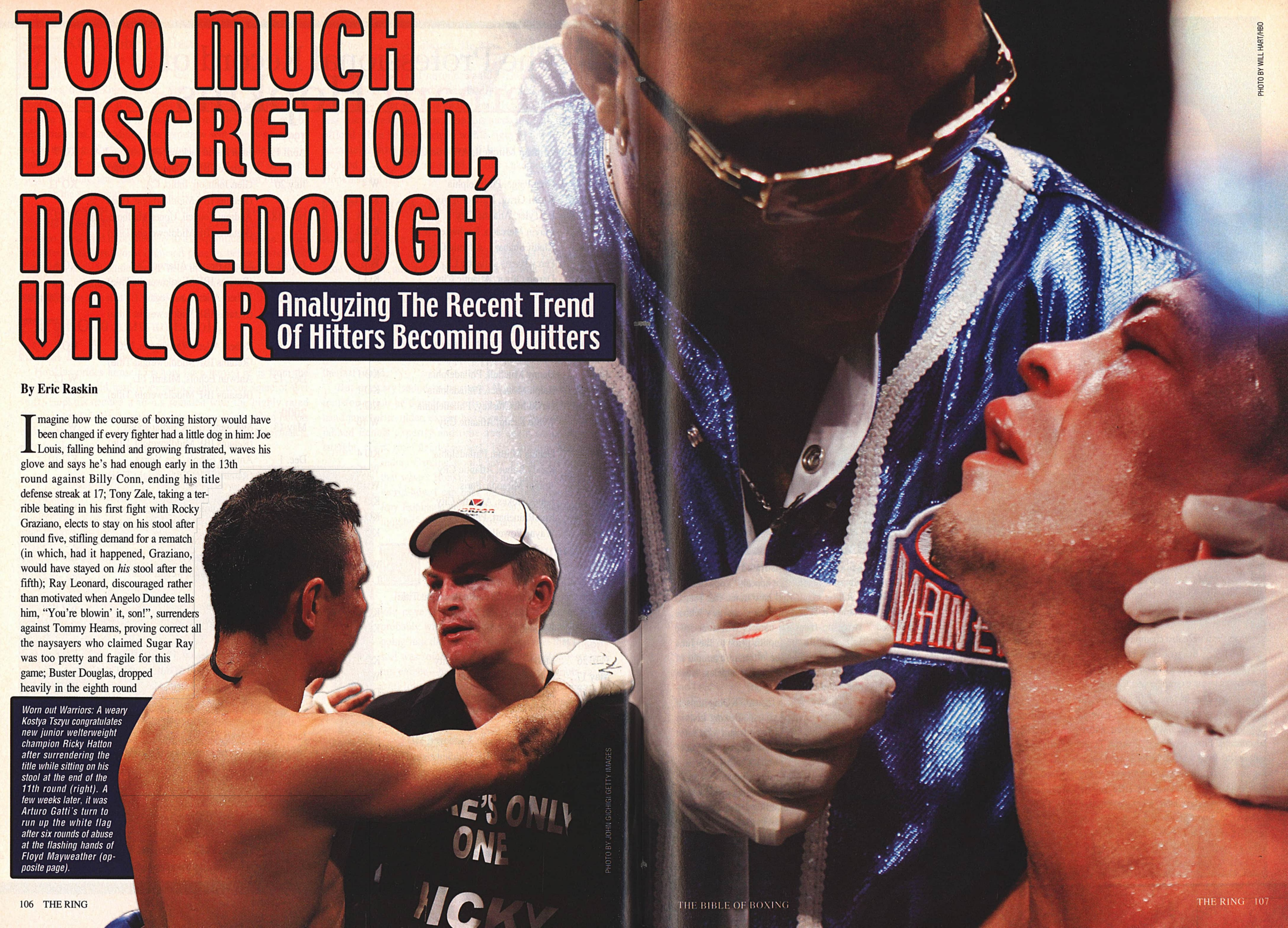


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Worn out Warriors: A weary Kostya Tszyu congratulates new junior welterweight champion Ricky Hatton after surrendering the title while sitting on his stool at the end of the 11th round (right). A few weeks later, it was Arturo Gatti's turn to run up the white flag after six rounds of abuse at the flashing hands of Floyd Mayweather (opposite page).

PHOTO BY PAUL J. RICHARDSON/GETTY

The most blatant quit job during the recent rash of capitulations came when Mike Tyson fell without getting hit at the end of the sixth round of his bout with Kevin McBride. Tyson reluctantly regained his feet and made it back to his corner, but failed to answer the bell for the seventh round.

against Mike Tyson, gets up just in time to tell Octavio Meyran he doesn't want any more, leaving Evander Holyfield to take Tyson's title instead (or leaving Tyson to duck Holyfield and eventually head off to prison as the undefeated champion).

Thankfully, the past can't be re-written, and all of those monumental victories will hold up as great examples of the power of persistence. But, in June 2005, the present was written in such a way that you have to wonder if persistence has become an outdated concept. First, on June 4, Kostya Tszyu quit on his stool against Ricky Hatton heading into the 12th round, handing over the world junior welterweight title in the process. Seven days later, a couple hundred miles apart, two fighters quit in the span of about an hour: First, Tyson refused to come out for round seven against Kevin McBride, and then Muhammad Abdullaev waved his glove in the air and asked referee Johnny Callas to stop his bout with Miguel Cotto early in the ninth round. And six days after that, in the main event of an ESPN2 *Friday Night Fights* show, once highly regarded junior lightweight Carlos Navarro literally pleaded with ref Jon Schorle to count him out against Bobby Pacquiao in round six, then *counted along with Schorle* when the official finally gave in to Navarro's bizarre demands in the seventh.

And eight days later, living legend Arturo Gatti put up little resistance when his corner chose to stop his bout with Floyd Mayweather between the sixth and seventh rounds. This was not a quit job, mind you; but by Gatti's standards, it was just submissive enough to make you wonder if the whole darned boxing world's gone soft on us.

When Acelino Freitas pulled a "no mas" against Diego Corrales last August, it seemed to be an isolated incident. But almost a year later, it appears "Popo" started a full-on trend. And how ironic that Freitas started it against Corrales, the guy whose twice-up-from-the-canvas win over Jose Luis Castillo the month prior to the June swoon served as the ultimate example of how gutting out a seemingly hopeless situation can sometimes pay off.

The concept of a fighter TKOing himself is nothing new, of course. Boxing history has seen a handful of famous quit jobs, most notably Roberto Duran turning "no mas" into a household phrase against Leonard, and Sonny Liston remaining on his stool while the heavyweight championship of the world was transferred to a young Cassius Clay. There was also Tyson quitting in the second Holyfield fight by biting Evander's ears (yes, that is every bit as much of a quit job as Duran's or Liston's), and Vitali

Klitschko retiring with a shoulder injury against Chris Byrd despite holding a huge lead on the cards. And in a three-month span in late-1998, three supposedly proud warriors of Mexican heritage all packed it in as if they had postfight engagements they needed to hurry off to: Genaro Hernandez against Mayweather, Yory Boy Campas against Fernando Vargas, and Julio Cesar Chavez against Oscar De La Hoya.

But boxing has never seen a deluge of surrenders quite like the one-after-another spurt we experienced this past June. It's enough to make the genuine tough guys of the game sick.

"I don't understand it," said Micky Ward, now two years into his retirement after a career in which he turned out-gutting opponents into an art form. "You're making all this money, and you quit? It's a disgrace. Never in my career did I even think about doing that. No way. Even looking back on the third Gatti fight, knowing the effect that finishing that fight had on me physically, I wouldn't do anything different. That's just not me. I was put here for one reason, to do what I did and fight the way I did. As long as I could stand, I would keep coming.

"On the other hand, maybe I shouldn't be too hard on these guys who quit. Each one has their own reasons why they did it, and I can't get inside their heads and know why they did it, so you have to look at each guy individually ... but it just ain't me."

Showtime exec Jay Larkin, whose network submitted for our enjoyment the Freitas, Tszyu, and Tyson submissions, agrees with Ward that each case must be judged individually, but that's about all that they agree on. Larkin isn't nearly the hardliner that Ward is when it comes to fighters pulling the plug on their own bouts.

"If a fighter decides he has no hope to win the fight, he can only get hurt, and he decides to retire from the fight, I don't know if I have a problem with that," Larkin said. "Yes, it's a blood sport, but even in a blood sport, there has to be a level of humanity. When you're talking about Acelino Freitas, Kostya Tszyu, guys who have proven their courage over the years, I don't see any reason to belittle them. Should a fighter keep getting up again to get knocked down again when he's given it his all? It's glamorous and romantic to get carried out on your shield, but do we really need to see that? Do you want to see another Gerald McClellan or Beethavean Scottland or Greg Page?"

Of course, nobody wants to see anything like those tragic situations. So the key question becomes, were the quitters in question really in danger of such dire consequences? And there are other questions that factor into determining how palatable the capitulation was: How winnable was the fight? How many rounds remained? And how unexpected was it, based on the fighter's history?

If, as Ward and Larkin say, each case should be judged individually, then we may as well look at each quit job—and each question.

How much physical danger was the fighter in? To those who believe vehemently in the warrior's code, there is no level of danger that makes quitting an excusable option. But taking more of a compassionate attitude, you can make a bit of a case for Tszyu (the fighter's physician, Dr. Bill Anseline, has categorically denied rumors that Tszyu has suffered any serious injuries, but Tszyu was clearly absorbing a lot of punishment) and for Freitas (Corrales is a huge puncher, and Popo was pretty well out of gas). Abdullaev couldn't see out of one eye, but he wasn't taking a serious beating, and too many fighters have gritted out vision impairment to excuse the Uzbek. Navarro was getting hurt by bodyshots, but he ultimately gave up on him-

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Miguel Cotto catches Mohamad Abdulaev, who beat him in the Olympics, on his swollen right eye with a left. Moments after this photo was taken, Abdulaev, his eye almost completely closed, turned to the referee and quit 59 seconds into the ninth round of the June bout at Madison Square Garden.

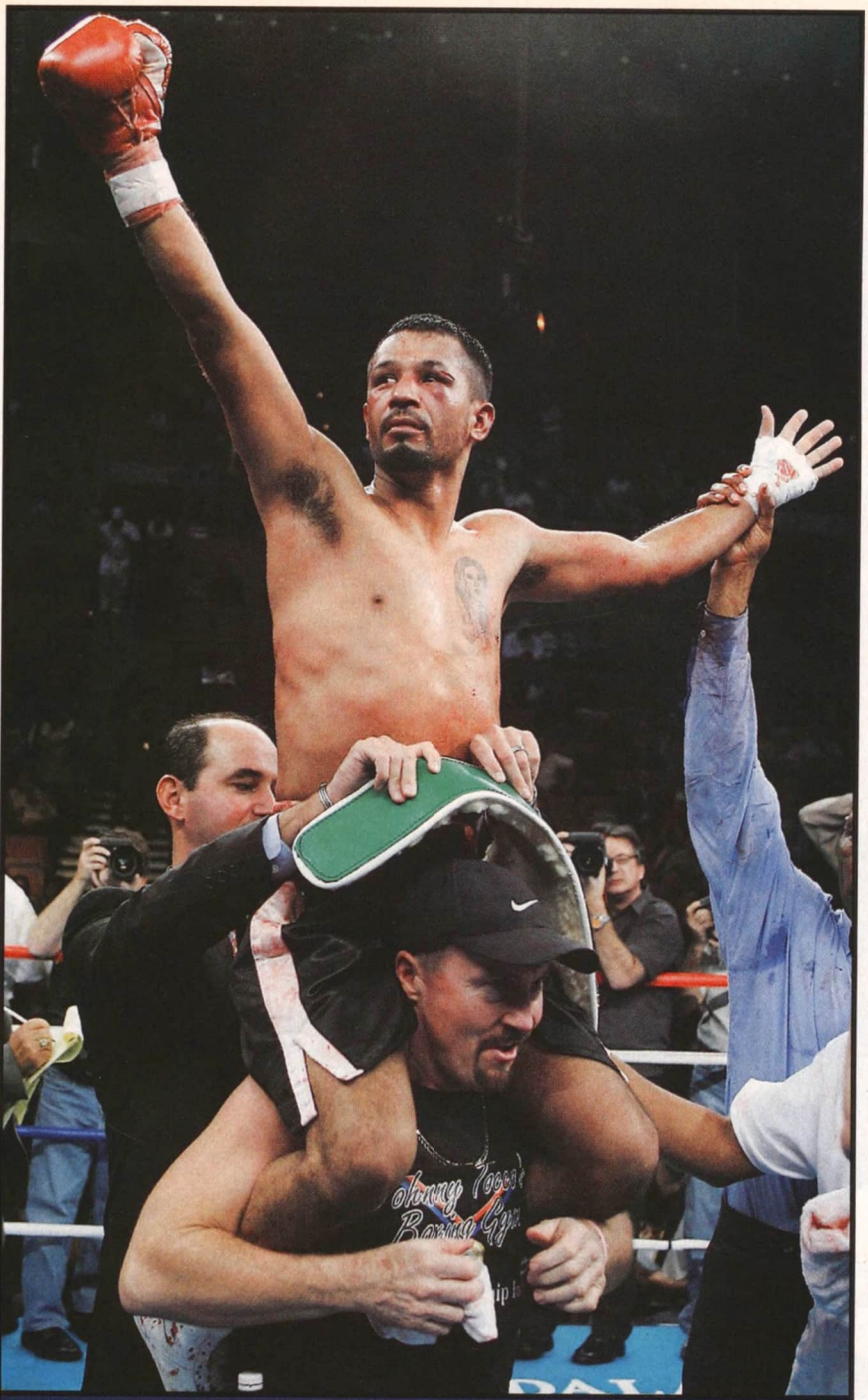


PHOTO BY ROBERT LABERGE/GETTY IMAGES

It looked like Carlos Navarro (pictured) had his career back on track after he TKO'd the always-difficult Agapito Sanchez. But in his very next bout, he inexplicitly quit in his televised fight with Bobby Pacquiao, and actually counted along with the referee while remaining on the canvas, fully conscious.

self without much physical convincing. And Tyson didn't appear to be in any real danger at all. McBride was doing much better than almost anyone expected, but he still wasn't actually doing all that well. From a purely physical standpoint, the surrenders of Tyson and Navarro were totally unjustifiable.

How winnable was the fight? Tyson again comes out looking like a chump in this category. Not only was he ahead in the fight until a two-point deduction in the sixth for headbutting pulled McBride about even, but he had a God-given gift that always keeps victory within reach.

"I feel like, if Tyson can even punch half as hard as usual, he can still knock anybody out, so I was surprised he gave up," Ward said.

Tszyu and Freitas have to be viewed somewhat similarly. Both are tremendous punchers, so even though Tszyu was too far behind to win on points unless he scored knockdowns, and Freitas' case was starting to seem quite hopeless, both had a chance for the sort of miracle turnaround that Corrales produced against Castillo. According to Larkin, however, Tszyu didn't see it that way.

"I spoke to Kostya immediately after the fight," Larkin said. "He told me that from the sixth round on, he didn't feel he had any way to win the fight. Now, on the scorecards, it was still pretty close, but he didn't feel it was. He felt he needed a knockout to win, and he didn't think he had it in him."

Abdullaev, too, is a dangerous puncher, so while it was unlikely that he was going to hurt Cotto or stage a late rally, it wasn't impossible. Even Navarro, with 21 knockouts among his 26 wins, clearly had at least a puncher's chance.

Unquestionably, Tyson's quit was the worst of the five in terms of his chances of winning, but none of the other four should've been feeling the total hopelessness they apparently *were* feeling.

How many rounds remained? The answer to this question is the reason Tszyu packing it in raised the ire of so many viewers. Freitas, Abdullaev, Tyson, and Navarro all get off fairly easy here, since they each had three or more rounds to go, and if you're feeling like a beaten man with that much time remaining, then there is a certain pointlessness to continuing on. But Tszyu's withdrawal with just one round to go was almost unfathomable. He had three minutes to empty his guns and try for the knockout, and even if it didn't come, he had only those three more minutes to survive in order to lose a decision and keep his reputation as a warrior intact. His apparent disregard for that reputation left many observers shocked.

"'Shocked' is an understatement," Larkin said of his reaction to the way Hatton-Tszyu ended. "I was stunned. In all the possible scenarios we entertained, Kostya not coming out to finish the fight was not one of them."

How unexpected was it, based on the fighter's history? This shouldn't matter much, but it does affect most people's level of acceptance of the white flag waving. With Tszyu, it was particularly unexpected, and therefore, fans felt more betrayed. It was hard to see the Abdullaev quit job coming either, considering the way he claimed he wanted to

fight on in his other loss, against Emmanuel Clottey.

Freitas was a surprise in one sense (remember the balls he showed against Jorge Barrios?), but not in another (he'd shown an increasing tendency toward a self-preservational style over the last several years). Navarro wasn't really a surprise at all, given his open admission that his heart hadn't really been in boxing for quite a while. (It was also easier to swallow due to the fact that the onetime prospect wasn't a top fighter anymore and few fans cared particularly about the result.)

And for Tyson, of course, there was nothing surprising about the way he bowed out; the only surprise was the level of competition he bowed out against.

"Tyson is such an anomaly in every way, it's hard to group him with anybody," Larkin said. "He just ran out of gas after a decade of running on empty.

"We know Mike seldom wins a difficult fight. When he's in a difficult fight, he usually resorts to frustrated tactics. When he bit Holyfield's ears, that was a form of quitting. When he tried to break Frans Botha's arm, that was a form of quitting. It's hard to classify Tyson. He's just an anomaly."

Thankfully, we may have seen the last of this animalistic anomaly. Tyson announced his retirement from boxing immediately after his retirement from the McBride fight.

Is that the way it ought to be? When a fighter retires in the ring, has he reached the point where he should retire from the fight game? Again, each case is different. But Larkin knows what he'd like the case to be with Tszyu.

"As a friend of his and a fan of his, I would like to see Kostya retire," the Showtime boss said. "Kostya was a superb fighter. And, I don't want to take anything away from Ricky Hatton here. Ricky gave a phenomenal performance, but I ask myself, would the younger Kostya Tszyu lose to this Ricky Hatton? On paper, no. Kostya's not getting any younger, faster, or stronger. Going out in this way is no shame. He's had a Hall of Fame career."

Micky Ward might not agree with that last statement. THE RING asked him if a fighter can quit and still be considered an all-time great, and Ward showed no mercy.

"No. I don't think so. All-time greats don't do that."

Ward, who now trains fighters (including *The Contender's* Jeff Fraza), was even more extreme with his feelings about what he'd do if one of his fighters ever quit on him.

"When we got back to the dressing room," Irish Micky said, "I'd kick him in the balls and tell him to get lost. No disrespect, but I couldn't work with him again. You don't ever quit on me! It's a hurtin' sport, and you know when you start boxing what you're getting yourself into."

Ward, like nearly every other boxing observer, believes it's the responsibility of the trainer to stop the fight when his charge is taking too much punishment or is in a hopeless situation. The key for fighters is to find a trainer you trust to know when is the appropriate time to bail you out. And if you have a trainer who knows when that time is, and you're ready to quit on yourself before he's ready to quit on you, then it's probably time to turn that decision to quit into a more permanent decision, because this isn't the business for you. ■

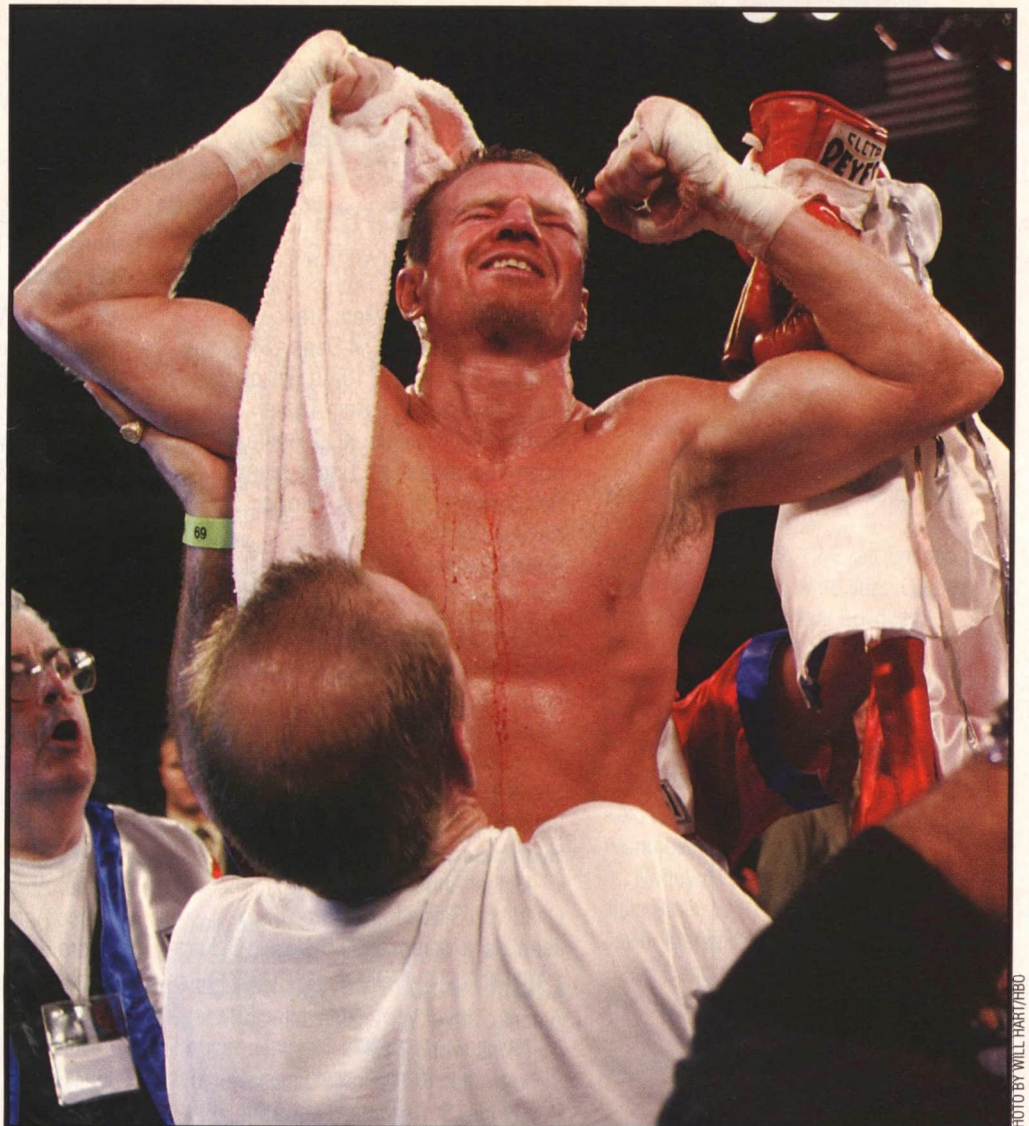


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Micky Ward is overcome with joy after winning the first bout in his classic trilogy with Gatti. Ward, who is now a trainer, is disgusted by the recent trend of fighters quitting when the going gets tough and has a special punishment in mind should one of his fighters ever surrender.

SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Calvin Brock KO 4 Kenny Craven
Samuel Peter KO 2 Taurus Sykes
Matt Skelton KO 7 Mark Krence
Vinny Maddalone KO 4 Dennis McKinney
Patrice L'Heureux W 10 Art Binkowski
Andre Purlette KO 2 Sam Tillman
Alexander Dimitrenko KO 2 Andreas Sidon
Adam Richards KO 1 Tyrone Muex
Rob Calloway W 12 Bob Mirovic
Kendall Gill KO 1 Trevor Biley
Robert Daniels KO 2 Jason Waller
Carl Baker KO 8 Scott Lansdowne

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Donnell Wiggins KO 3 Norman Johnson
Ignacio Esparza KO 1 Juan Carlos Martínez
Alexander Petkovic W 8 Vadim Safonov
Pietro Aurino KO 4 Artem Solomko
Shauna George D 10 Willie Herring
Loris Emiliani W 10 Juriy Konev
Hugo Hernan Garay KO 4
Miguel Angel Robledo
Chad Van Sickle KO 7 Aaron Jaco
Jean Marc Monrose KO 5 Alessio Sakara

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

Antonio Tarver W 12 Glen Johnson
(*Wins World Title*)
Silvio Branco KO 6 Drago Janusevic
Kenny Ellis D 10 James Lubwama
Stipe Drews W 12 Omar Eduardo Gonzalez
Peter Haymer W 10 Tony Oakey
Kamel Amrane KO 6 Merick Roberge
Dale Westerman W 12 Yoshinori Nishizawa
Erasmus Magwaza KO 5 Mzonjani Majola
Anne Wolfe KO 6 Marsha Valley

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Otis Grant W 12 Charles Adamu
Danny Green KO 5 James Crawford
Rudy Markussen KO 1 Hacine Cherifi
Les Sherrington KO 5 Jason Pearce
Joe Spina W 10 Carl Daniels
Carl Froch W 12 Matthew Barney
Robert Stieglitz KO 5 Francis Cheka
Denis Inkin KO 4 Gerardo Soria
Ryan Walls KO 8 Simeon Cover
Malik Dziarra W 8 Nathan King
Roedolf Venter W 8
Eduardo Jesus Oscar Rojas
Eduardo Ayala D 10 Juan Carlos Sanchez
Esteban Camou W 12 Juan Carlos Barreto

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Jermain Taylor W 12 Bernard Hopkins
(*Wins World Title*)
Felix Sturm W 12 Jorge Sendra
Arthur Abraham W 12 Howard Eastman
Marco Antonio Rubio KO 2 David Toribio
Andre Ward KO 3 Ben Aragon
Sebastian Sylvester W 12 Morrade Hakkar
Fumito Kimura W 8 Kintaro Okadayama
Pradeep Singh KO 11 Arama Tabuai
Ian Gardner W 10 Mohammad Said
Rasheem Brown KO 2 Chris Troupe
Hector Camacho W 10 Raul Jorge Munoz
Fukutaro Ujiie W 8 Yuzo Kiyota
Freddie Cuevas KO 2 James Kitchens
Julio Jean W 8 Eromosele Albert
Steve Ede W 6 Mark Wall
Toshihiko Itagaki W 10 Satoru Suzuki
Khoren Gevor W 8 Franck Mezaache

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Roman Karmazin W 12 Kassim Ouma
(*Wins IBF Title*)
Ike Quartey W 10 Verno Phillips
Vernon Forrest KO 2 Sergio Rios
Manabu Komatsu KO 4 Rambo Panyatip
Javier Alberto Mamani KO 2
Juan Mauricio Marino
John Anderson D 10
Roberto Borges Oliveira
Reda Zam Zam W 12 Hamlet Petrosian
Laszlo Buranyi W 12 Marco Schulze
Vitali Tsypko W 12 Brian Magee
Danilo Häussler W 12 Cristian Sanavia
Badru Lusambya KO 6 Tshepo Mashego
Archak Termilksatian KO 1 Eddie Sanchez

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Junior welterweight Carlos Maussa slams a right into Vivian Harris

Keiji Eguchi KO 3 Chartchai Kiatpayathai
Jamie Moore KO 6 Michael Jones
Brice Faradji W 12 Jozsef Matolcsi
Giovanni Lorenzo W 8 Ronald Weaver
Daniel Dawson W 8
Jorge Dario David Gomez Perez
Adam Green KO 5 Frankie Sanchez
Ian MacKillop W 8 Wayne Harris

WELTERWEIGHTS

Thomas Damgaard W 8 Stephan Chungu
Akira Takeyama KO 1 Sornsak Twingym
Gilberto Reyes W 12 Michael Santos
Nathan Ward KO 4 James Paisley
Oscar Diaz W 8 Arturo Urena
Ade Alfons W 10 Muhammed Yusif
Hector Camacho Jr. KO 3 Francisco Barra
Raul Eduardo Bejarano KO 5
Oscar Benavides Munoz
Sammy Smith W 10 Tony Montana
Joel Julio KO1 Arthur Medina
Shinsuke Saito KO 7 Yoshiharu Ikeda
Henry Crawford KO 1 Fernando Jimenez
Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. KO 4 Ruben Galvan
Antonio Lauri W 12 Slawomir Ziemlewicz
Michael Jennings KO 1 Jimmy Vincent

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

Floyd Mayweather KO 6 Arturo Gatti
(*Wins WBC Title*)
Carlos Maussa KO 7 Vivian Harris
(*Wins WBA Title*)
Junior Witter W 12 Andreas Kotelnik
Souleymane M'baye KO 3 Walter Leichning
Lamont Peterson KO 1 John Frazier
Lavka Sim KO 2 Shawn Simmons
Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. KO 4 Ruban Galvan
Damian Fuller D 10 John Brown
Wilfredo Rivera W 8 Darien Ford
Raymundo Beltran KO 1 Jaime Orrantia
Zaid Zavaleta KO 2 Simon Lopez
Sataporn Singwangcha W 12 Nonoy Gonzales
Giuseppe Lauri KO 10 Laszlo Komjathi
Daudy Bahari W 12 Pongsak Rientuanthong
Jose Antonio Izquierdo KO 1 Ulises Jimenez

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Leavander Johnson KO 7 Stefano Zoff
(*Wins Vacant IBF Title*)
Juan Diaz KO 5 Arthur Cruz
(*Non-Title Fight*)
Ricky Quiles W 12 Javier Jauregui
Acelino Freitas KO 1 Fabian Salazar
Anthony Peterson KO 1
Anthony Middlebrooks
Diego Martin Alzugaray W 12
Julio Cesar Alganaraz
Lee Meager W 10 Martin Watson
Chikashi Inada KO 8 Sung Woo Park
Graham Earl KO 9 Kevin Bennett
Sergio Eduardo Gonzalez W 10
Diego Alejandro Madole
Nelson Lara KO 3 Noel Gomez
Shoji Kawase KO 2
Thongcharoen Mahasap Condo
Ricky Burns W 8 Haider Ali
Rafael Ortiz KO 5 Michaelangelo Lynks

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

Nedal Hussein KO 5 Aree Phosuwangym
Willie Limond W 10 Kevin O'Hara
Gerardo Zayas W 10 Michael Lozada
Baby Lorona Jr. KO 4 Darathai Sitoh
Ivan Fiorletta W 12 Nacho Mendoza
Motokazu Abe KO 3 Teerasak Eauchumpon
John Murray W 8 Mounir Guebbas
Gairy St. Clair KO 4 Chuwan Sor Vorapin
Guadalupe Rosales W 12
Hector Javier Marquez
Abel Berrelleza KO 4 Cayetano Romero
Leva Kirakosyan KO 6
Remigio Daniel Molina

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Ken Mitsuyama W 10 Wanhin Chuwatana
Spend Abazi W 6 Geoffrey Munika
Jackson Asiku KO 3 Saulus Kaunda
Saohin Srithai Condo Tech. Win 9
Arnel Porras
Takahiro Aoh W 10 Yoshinori Miyata
Alisher Rahimov W 10 Marcel Kasimov
Hirokazu Otani KO 4 Hiroshi Aoki
Marcela Eliana Acuna W 8
Yolis Marrugo Franco
Thomas Mashaba W 12 Vuyani Bungu
Edward Mpofu D 8 Themba Shicila
Masanori Sugita W 10
Kularbdang Kiatkrerin
Saohin Srithai Condo Tech. Win 9
Arnel Porras
Melinda Cooper W 4 Lina Ramirez
Elena Reid W 6 Stephanie Dobbs

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Oscar Larios KO 10 Wayne McCullough
(*Retains WBC Title*)
Mahyar Monshipour KO 9 Julio Zarate
(*Retains WBA Title*)
Fahsan (3K Battery) Por Thawatchai KO 2
Joel Escol
Daniel Kodjo Sassou W 8 Moebi Sarouna
Gerardo Martinez W 10 Erik Lopez
Giovanni Urbina W 8 Antonio Torres
Alex Escaner W 12 Ayon Naranjo
Wethya Sakmuangklang KO 3
Masakazu Sugawara
Trino Cordoba W 10 Rodolfo Martinez
Somsak Sithchatchawal KO 5 Vuyisile Bebe
Akio Konishi KO 7 Hiromasa Ohashi
Yukio Hatano KO 1 Mongkolchai Twingym
Sumihiko Saito KO 5 Keiji Yokomakura

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Takefumi Sakata W 10 Takuro Kodama
Malcolm Tunacao KO 7 Ryoichi Hidaka
Masayuki Fujigake W 10 Kaona Klongpajol
Teerapong Distar W 12 Rico Genon
Hideki Imanishi W 8 Masafumi Otake
Eugene Gonzales KO 1 Roselito Campaña
Takafumi Himeno KO 4 Samart Sithsaithon
Masayuki Mitani W 10 Junji Ohkami
Kwang Ok Kim W 10 Misa Morimoto
Kenbun Torres W 8 Saensak Singmanasak
Sonny Manakane KO 8 Richard Olisa
Nestor Hugo Paniagua KO 4
Jorge Antonio Corimayo

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

Masamori Tokuyama W 12
Katsushige Kawashima
(*Wins WBC Title*)
Martin Castillo W 12 Hideyasu Ishihara
(*Retains WBA Title*)
Fernando Montiel W 12 Evert Briceno
Omar Nino Romero W 10 Juan Gamez
Allan Fuentes W 10 Roy Doliguez
Ali Rochmad KO 2 Paul Roger
Myung Ok Ryu KO 2 Elizabeth Sanchez
Alejandro Hernandez W 10 Abel Ochoa
Omar Salado KO 6 Eduardo Morales

FLYWEIGHTS

Koki Kameda KO 1 Saman Sorjaturong
Wanmeechok Singwancha W 12
Nobuyuki Enomoto
Julia Sahin W 8 Oksana Romanova
Javier Maravilla W 8 Regulo Gamez
Celso Danggod W 12 Sukarno Banjao
Yon Sun Han W 8 Cho Rong Son
Sonny Boy Jaro KO 3 Edwin Ubatay
Brahim Asloum Tech. Win 8
Edgar Velasquez
Rocky Fuentes KO 1 Anis Ceunfin
Yasutaka Kuroki KO 5 Hiromasa Kato
Atsushi Mando W 8 Daochai KT Gym
Katsuhiko Iezumi W 8 Yusuke Imamiya
Ivan Pozo W 12 Andrea Sarritzu

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

Luis Alberto Lazarte W 12
Raul Eliseo Medina
Ulises Solis KO 8 Carlos Fajardo
Kaichon Sor Vorapin Tech. Win 6
Along Dinoy
Edgar Sosa KO 6 Oscar Martinez
Benjie Sorolla KO 2 Poonsawat Nimitchai
Eun Soon Choi W 10 Yvonne Caples
Masato Hatakeyama KO 4
Petch Sakrungruang
Shuichi Yoshida KO 8 Hidetaka Nakayama
Nethra Sasiprapa KO 2 Alwi Alhabsy

STRAWWEIGHTS

Ivan Calderon W 12 Gerardo Verde
Florante Condes KO 4 Danny Linasa
Makoto Suzuki W 10 Ricardo Albia
Herman Pattypeilohi D 8 Yoseph Fau

BOXING EQUIPMENT
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PRESENTS

The RING

FIGHTER *of the* MONTH

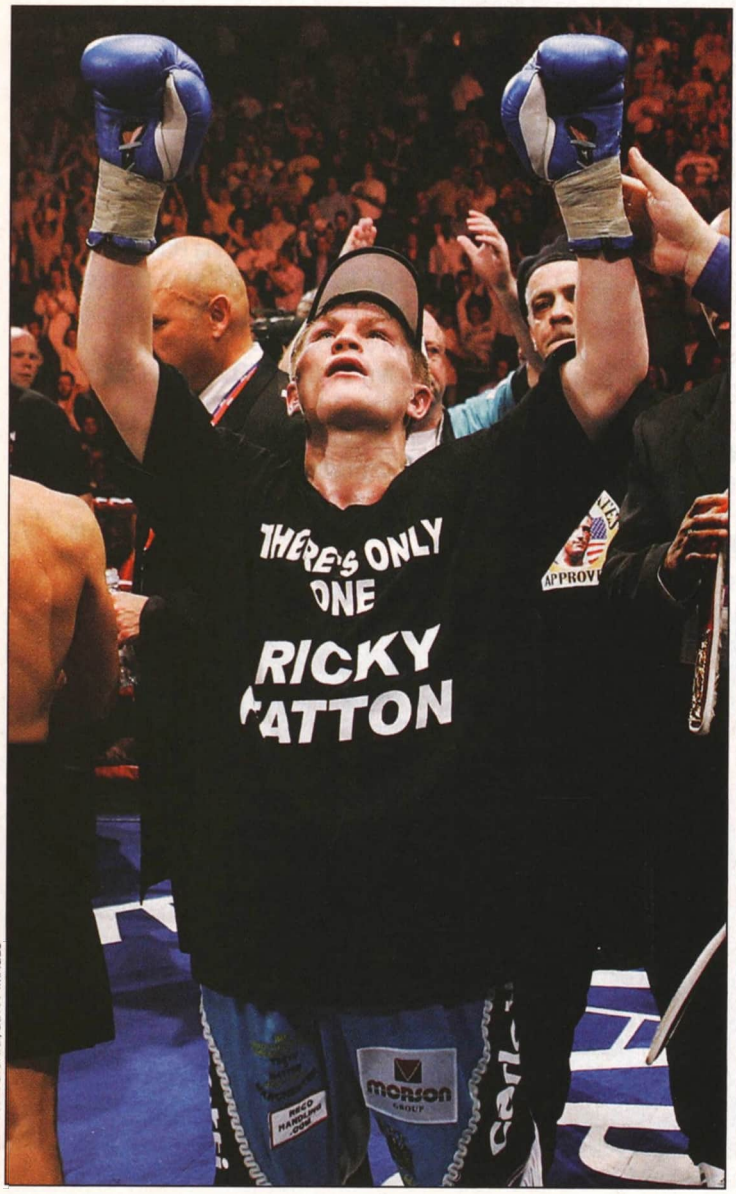


PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Sometimes, when a fighter quits, it detracts from his opponent's victory. Either the quitting becomes the story, or the fact that the winner was deprived of a full-on knockout adversely affects the public's perception of his accomplishment.

Not so with Ricky Hatton's upset win over Kostya Tszyu to claim the universally recognized world junior welterweight title. Maybe Tszyu denied Hatton a clean knockout victory … but he also made the strongest possible statement about how badly "The Hitman" was beating him up. His surrender after round 11 said more about how effective Hatton was than anything that could have happened in the 12th round. Tszyu, not only a great boxer probably headed for the Hall of Fame, but also thought to be a genuine tough guy, caved in and submitted. For someone like Hatton, who was fighting not just for the title, but also for respect from a doubting public, does it get any more satisfying than that?

Hatton had a game plan—get in Tszyu's chest, push him backward, and never let up—and he stuck to it brilliantly. It was a complete performance from a fighter who's much more complete than most of us realized prior to this showdown. He bumped off a pound-for-pounder, and joined the pound-for-pound list himself.

Whether or not Tszyu is the Quitter of the Month is subject to debate. Whether Hatton is the Fighter of the Month is not.

Ricky Hatton

RINGSIDE REPORTS

Carlos Maussa KO 7 Vivian Harris

Atlantic City, New Jersey: The 12,675 fans that filled the Boardwalk Hall for the Floyd Mayweather-Arturo Gatti showdown got an unexpected treat when Maussa, considered pretty much a no-hoper going in, upset Harris to capture the WBA super lightweight title in a decidedly bizarre bout.

Harris, who took the fight for short money in order to appear on the same show as fellow 140-pounders Gatti and Mayweather, clearly wanted to score a quick knockout to prove he was worthy of swapping punches with the winner of the main event. Seconds into the opening round, he drilled Maussa, 139, with a straight right to the head that sent the lanky Colombian reeling backward. Overanxious to end matters then and there, Harris missed wildly, which gave Maussa time to clear his head, and during the last minute of the round, the challenger launched a spirited counterattack. His awkward, looping blows backed off Harris and had him under heavy pressure at the bell.

Harris, 139, Brooklyn, New York, was undeterred and went right back after Maussa in the second. He landed a number of hard shots that rattled the challenger, who flopped around like a drunken marionette but stayed upright. And at the end of the round, Harris returned to his corner with his mouth open, gasping for breath.

The third was close, but Maussa's rubbery, unorthodox style was still giving Harris fits. He not only absorbed Harris' best shots, he lashed back from the most extraordinary angles with punches that looked like they'd been designed by the Three Stooges.

By the start of the fourth, both men were showing the signs of battle. Harris was cut over the right eye; Maussa's face was bruised and lumpy. But while Maussa was building up a head of steam, Harris was looking more and more deflated, and halfway into the round he seemed on the verge of exhaustion.

Urged by his trainer, Emanuel Steward, to forget gunning for a kayo and box, Harris kept his distance for most of the fifth and tried to get his jab working. Maussa responded by dropping his arms and standing there, hoping to lure the titleholder back into his power zone. A few words from referee Earl Brown (USA) got things going again, but nothing much happened the remainder of the round.

Harris, 27, hardly did anything in the sixth, while Maussa broke through with some hurtful-looking punches to both the head and body the last minute of the round. As Harris trudged back to his corner at the bell, his body language clearly indicated he wasn't going to last much longer.

Maussa wasted no time taking the initiative in the sixth, and after a series of hard blows further softened his worn-out foe, he unleashed a long left hook that caught the retreating Harris flush on the jaw and sent him down near the ropes. The excited challenger rushed forward, leaned over, and tried to nail Harris' head to the floor with a right hand. Fortunately, the bottom rope deflected the blow, so no additional damage was inflicted.

Harris, 25-2-1 (17), lay curled in a fetal-like position for most of the referee's count, and then tried to struggle up at the last moment, but was still on one knee when Brown reached 10 at the 0:43 mark.

"It was a hard fight," said Maussa, who raised his record to 19-2 (17). "I might not have been 100 percent, but I obtained the result I wanted."

And the after-the-knockdown punch?

"My intention was never to hit him on the floor," said the new beltholder. "I only wanted to scare him. The punch never landed."

One of the 33-year-old Maussa's losses was an eighth-round TKO at the hands Miguel Cotto, so it's difficult to estimate what his arrival as a player in the talent-rich 140-pound division will mean in the long run. But the week following the fight, there were whispers that he might get a shot at world champion Ricky Hatton, who was ringside. And that's something very few would have considered even remotely possible when the fighters entered the ring.

Television: HBO Pay-Per-View

Promoters: Main Events, Top Rank, Caesars & Bally's Atlantic City

(6-25-05)

Nigel Collins

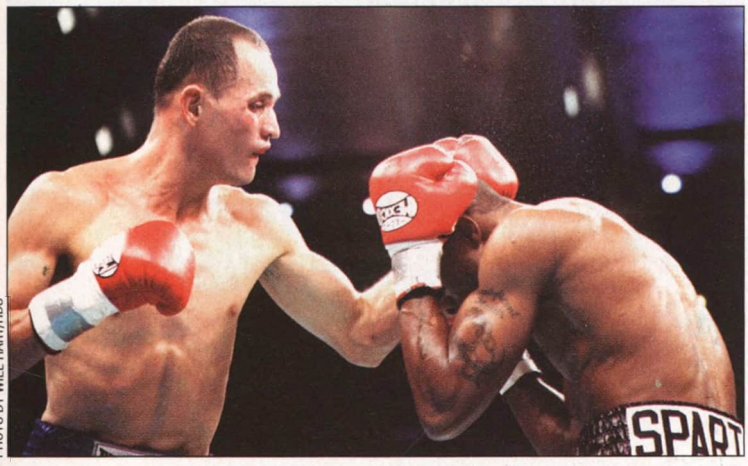


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Maussa hooks Harris en route to major upset victory

Ivan Calderon W 12 Gerardo Verde

Atlantic City, New Jersey: After building an early lead, the highly touted Calderon was practically run out of the ring by Verde, before hanging on, literally and figuratively, to the WBO minimumweight strap on the Mayweather-Gatti undercard at Boardwalk Hall.

Southpaw Calderon, 104, Guaynabo, Puerto Rico, has established a reputation as one of today's smoothest technicians, and he lived up to his rep the first few rounds, boxing beautifully and staying a punch or two ahead of his unheralded rival. Verde, meanwhile, tried unsuccessfully to catch Calderon on the way in with right hands. But in the fourth, a subtle change took place when Verde, 103, Mexico City, landed a few bodyshots, which clearly made Calderon uncomfortable.

Action was sparse the next few rounds and the crowd booed as Calderon stayed out of trouble and pecked away with light punches. But by the ninth, the so-called "Iron

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Calerdon shows aggression in the early rounds against Verde

Boy" was in full retreat, and Verde was charging hard, swinging wildly at times, but keeping the pressure on.

The last three rounds were all Verde. He shook the 30-year-old Calderon with a right hand late in the 10th, and when he continued to connect solidly to both the head and body the 11th, Calderon began to grab and hold at every opportunity. Verde was all over the backpedaling, clinching Calderon again in the 12th round, swarming forward, winging punches in a desperate attempt to catch up on the scorecards. Calderon's main concern was obviously to make it to the final bell.

Two of the judges, Melvina Lathan (USA) and Adelaide Byrd (USA), seemingly dozed off halfway through the fight and slept through Verde's late-round rally, and turned in ridiculously wide scores of 117-111 in favor of Calderon. Debra Barnes' (USA) 115-113 tally in Calderon's favor was much more representative of what took place between the ropes. THE RING scored it 115-115.

Whether Calderon, 23-0 (5), had an off-night or has been overrated will be decided in future fights, while Verde, 13-2 (19), certainly fought well enough to merit future title-fight consideration.

The referee was Randy Neumann (USA).

Television: HBO Pay-Per-View

Promoters: Main Events, Top Rank, Caesars & Bally's Atlantic City

(6-25-05)

Nigel Collins

Miguel Cotto KO 9 Muhammad Abdullaev

New York, New York: If you'd followed their professional careers closely, it was almost impossible to imagine Abdullaev giving super-talent Cotto an overly stiff test in the Puerto Rican's Madison Square Garden debut. But because of what happened before their pro careers began—Abdullaev bouncing Cotto from the 2000 Olympics en route to a gold medal—in conjunction with a rocky outing for Cotto four months earlier against DeMarcus Corley, there was a reasonable faction of observers talking upset. The evidence presented in their pro careers, however, won out, as Cotto controlled the action most of the way until Abdullaev, his right eye swollen shut, asked referee Johnny Callas (USA) to stop the bout 57 seconds into the ninth round.

The entertaining, close first round saw both fighters showing confidence in their chins, willing to get hit in order to land their own powershots. Abdullaev, 138¾, Hamburg, Germany, via Uzbekistan, landed a couple of right hands (his money punch) early in the second, but Cotto, also 138¾, Caguas, Puerto Rico, came back with a pair of left hooks (his money punch). Later in the round, Cotto displayed his brilliance at mixing defense and offense, as he slipped shots while landing pinpoint combinations off the ropes.

The third round was mostly dominated by Cotto, 24, and his effective jabs and left hooks to the head and body, but it was a difficult round to score because Abdullaev, 31, landed the single best punch, a right hand that made Cotto hold. The pace slowed in the fourth, and the Uzbeki underdog had a good round in the fifth, a round Cotto seemed almost to be taking off. But the Puerto Rican came back in the sixth and seventh, firing outstanding two-, three-, and four-punch combinations, while absorbing occasional right hands from Abdullaev.

Abdullaev amped up the pressure in the eighth, and got through with an elbow that looked fairly intentional, but toward the end of the round, his right eye started swelling from above, presumably from the persistent onslaught of left hooks. To say Abdullaev didn't respond well to the injury would be a definite understatement. He looked lost throughout the ninth, and after Cotto landed a nifty combo, Abdullaev waved his glove, telling the ref he'd had enough. Callas called in the ringside doctor to take a look before just stopping it, but Abdullaev, 15-2 (12), repeated his intentions to the physician, and that was that.

With the win, Cotto moved to 24-0 (20), and appears as ready as he's going to be for the division's elite—namely, Floyd Mayweather and world champion Ricky Hatton.

Television: HBO

Promoter: Top Rank

(6-11-05)

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Cotto flattens Abdulaev's nose with a flush left

Almazbek Raiymkulov D 12 Joel Casamayor

New York, New York: "Kid Diamond" didn't necessarily come out of his first major test sparkling and shimmering, but he wasn't exposed as a hunk of cubic zirconium either. Some felt Raiymkulov deserved the decision in his HBO debut, some felt he didn't, but the fact that he came away with a draw against Casamayor—a former 130-pound titlist who was coming off debatable decision losses to elite lightweights Jose Luis Castillo and Diego Corrales—was enough to establish the unbeaten up-and-comer as a legitimate player in the 135-pound division.

Casamayor, 133½, known as a slow starter, fought the first round at Madison Square Garden as though his primary goal was to reverse that reputation. The Miami, Florida-based Cuban cut Raiymkulov, 134, Las Vegas, Nevada, via Kyrgyzstan, on the right eyebrow, staggered him with two quick right hands, and then dropped him to a knee with another right. Not a bad opening round for a supposed slow starter. Casamayor did live up to one of his reputations, however; his penchant for fighting dirty was upheld when he landed a couple of punches while Kid Diamond was down, earning a warning from referee Pete Santiago (USA) after he finished giving Raiymkulov the eight-count.

The 28-year-old Raiymkulov started getting in gear in the second round, backing Casamayor off with a stiff right hand. The next several rounds went back and forth (and for the most part grew increasingly dull), with Raiymkulov generally playing the role of aggressor while the slick Casamayor, 33, tried to land left-hand counters.

Raiymkulov landed a couple of good right hands in the seventh, and seemed to buzz the Cuban mildly with a left hook in the eighth. Casamayor responded in typical Casamayor fashion—by picking up two warnings for low blows.

Kid Diamond appeared to have pulled ahead by the end of the ninth, but the 10th seemed to go Casamayor's way, and in the 11th, Casamayor stunned Raiymkulov with a left after the Kyrgyz fighter's foot got tangled in a ringside photographer's camera strap. Raiymkulov lost his balance and almost went down from a right hand in round 12, then got hurt and had to hold following a left hook to the jaw. Casamayor, 31-3-1 (19), continued to dominate the final round, until Raiymkulov, 20-0-1 (12), exploded with a left-right-left combination with 12 seconds remaining on the clock, causing Casamayor to do a subtle drunken dance.

It legitimately seemed it could have gone either way, with the fact that Raiymkulov moved forward for most of the fight making him appear more likely to get the nod from the three American judges. Judge Billy Costello did indeed score it for Kid Diamond, by a wide 116-111 tally, but Tom Schreck had it 115-112 for Casamayor, and Luis Rivera left it deadlocked with a 114-114 score. THE RING had Raiymkulov winning, 114-113. The CompuBox numbers were similarly close, as Casamayor outlanded Raiymkulov 140-138 according to the punch counters.

Television: HBO
Promoter: Top Rank
(6-11-05)

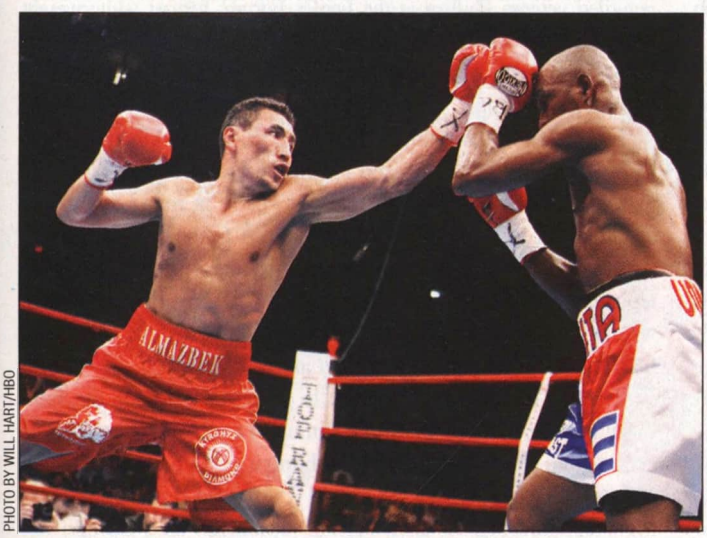


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Raiymkulov attempts to penetrate Casamayor's guard

Jesus Chavez W 12 Carlos Hernandez

Los Angeles, California: A symbolic prelude to the final round of this epic junior lightweight title eliminator illustrated what's great about boxing in any era. After 33 minutes of pounding the poop out of each other, iron man Chavez and "Famoso" Hernandez, battered and weary, trudged to mid-ring and shared a heartfelt embrace. The near sellout crowd that came for Julio Cesar Chavez' so-called farewell fight at Staples Center knew they'd witnessed a first-rate bonus thriller, and the assembled swarm applauded in sincere tribute. Then they screamed for blood.

It's nice to report that neither Chavez, 41-3 (28), nor Hernandez, 41-5-1 (24), finished the fight with much noticeable damage, which is hard to believe considering all the heavy leather each man landed. Either guy could have gotten the split decision that Chavez earned, and each man took his share of punches.

On the plus side, at least it looks like both fine-tuned brawlers will see increased paydays for their efforts—probably in a rematch. There were plenty of calls for another go after this razor-close whap-athon. What looked good on paper was even better in the ring.

Chavez, 129, Austin, Texas, entered the arena as a huge favorite with the vocal audience, but howls of support were equal by the end. Hernandez, also 129, West Covina, California, looked a bit sturdier in initial exchanges with lead rights. Chavez didn't take long to counter and stunned Hernandez with an uppercut in round three.

Each man threw so many big shots it seemed they forgot about other forms of defense. By round four, Chavez, 32, looked a bit stronger and inched ahead on the cards. Many rounds were hard to call as they stood toe to toe, trading at mid-ring. A lump grew over the 34-year-old Hernandez' right eye by the halfway point.

Hernandez tried to stay away and box more, but soon he went back into the storm. Going into the late rounds, the contest was still up for grabs. Chavez backed Famoso up enough in round 11 to carry that stanza. The crowd was on its feet screaming for the entirety of round 12. This was boxing as it should be, and ref David Mendoza (USA) let it be. Judge David Denkin (USA) scored it 115-113 Hernandez, but was overruled by Lou Filippo (USA), who had it 115-113 for Chavez, and Max DeLuca (USA), who saw Chavez a wide 117-111 winner.

"I think I proved I'll give everything in a big fight," said Hernandez.

"There was no loser in this fight," said Chavez. "It was a must-win situation for me, and I gutted it out. Hernandez hit a lot harder

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Chavez (left) and Hernandez stole the show on Julio Cesar Chavez' "Adios Los Angeles" card

than I expected. It took its toll. It was such a great fight, it kind of revived me. I'm very happy to be the fighter I've become."

This was one of former titlist Chavez' most significant victories, and sets him up for a major rematch—either with Hernandez in October, or possibly with Erik Morales, who decisioned him a year-and-a-half ago, in September.

Television: Showtime Pay-Per-View
Promoter: Top Rank
(5-28-05)
Phil Woolever

Rafael Marquez W 12 Ricardo Vargas

Los Angeles, California: The 29-year-old bantamweight king Marquez had set the bar quite high for himself lately. He didn't really clear it this time, thanks in part to the effort of the skilled and stubborn Vargas, but he did prevail in his fifth defense of the IBF 118-pound belt.

Marquez was considered by many as the best pound-per-pound performer on the Julio Cesar Chavez-Ivan Robinson "Adios" card. That assessment may in fact be accurate, but you couldn't tell it from the subdued performance that Marquez, 116½, Mexico City, Mexico, turned in against an inspired "Chapo" Vargas, 118, Tijuana, Mexico.

That's not to say it was a bad scrap. In fact, the crowd howled much of the way. Vargas, 33, deserves credit for showing up ready to win, but it still seemed a case of Marquez making things harder for himself than they needed to be. Of course, it's easy to make such calls sitting on your butt outside the ropes, but openings were there or should have been forced.

Marquez got on his toes and stayed composed, perhaps too much so. He leaned in and chopped away at Vargas, who never failed to respond. Vargas gave ground as Marquez popped him with straight lefts. Vargas fired back to the ribs, but ate progressively more shots from each side. Still, Vargas kept up a solid work rate and didn't give Marquez the chance to open up.

Marquez' typical mid-rounds surge never happened. Sturdy Vargas darted in and out behind lead rights and snuck in some left hook-right hand combos that increased his momentum. Marquez blasted Vargas into the ropes with a big shot in the fifth. Vargas picked off many of Marquez' follow-up punches, but still ate rights on unsteady legs. He threw back, to the crowd's delight.

Vargas, hanging tough, landed unintentional-looking low shots to go along with many legitimate thuds to the gut that kept Marquez from overwhelming him. Vargas continued to earn respect as they traded bodyshots, until a nick over his right eyebrow made him more defensive-minded in the ninth.

It looked like Marquez might show some familiar finishing fire midway through the 10th, as big bangs made Vargas hang on, and referee Pat Russell (USA) checked Vargas closely. Vargas stutter-stepped back to his corner, but by now he had won over the crowd.

Vargas avoided real trouble in the 11th, but the final frame saw Marquez club him along the ropes. A huge overhand right almost did the trick for Marquez, but Vargas managed one more big exchange before a wicked combination finally made him tumble down to the canvas with half a minute left. Marquez, 34-3 (30), literally sprinted across ring to finish him, but Vargas, 37-11-3 (12), traded blasts with the titleholder until the end.

Judges Fritz Werner and Marty Denkin both saw it 116-111, while Gwen Adair had it 118-109, all for Marquez.

Television: Showtime Pay-Per-View
Promoter: Top Rank
(5-28-05)
Phil Woolever

Ike Quartey W 10 Verno Phillips

Memphis, Tennessee: At the time Quartey last fought on HBO, Michael Grant was an undefeated heavyweight contender, Oscar De La Hoya and Shane Mosley had just embarked on a press tour to announce their first fight, and Lou DiBella was still making the fights for the network. Much has changed since then, obviously, but Quartey, who is now promoted by DiBella, proved in his second fight after a five-year layoff that he hasn't changed all that much. He still has an excellent jab, he's still a world-class fighter, and he's still fairly chinny, especially late in fights. After a slow start against well-regarded veteran Phillips at the FedEx Forum, former welterweight titlist Quartey showed flashes of his old self through the middle rounds, survived a near knockout late in the fight, and won a narrow unanimous decision.

For the first two rounds, Quartey, 156, Accra, Ghana, looked extremely slow and rusty, and Phillips, 155½, Denver, Colorado, took full advantage. He hurt "Bazooka" early in round one with a counter right to the chin, and a counter left to the chin later made Quartey's knees buckle. It was an extremely one-sided round, and an argument could have been made to score it 10-8 even though there were no knockdowns. The second round saw more of the same, with Quartey wobbled by a right uppercut just before the bell.

The 35-year-old African started to get into the fight in the third, flashing some combos and better timing in a round that could have been scored either way. The fourth through seventh rounds were all Quartey, as Phillips, looking an old 35, slowed down quite strikingly considering his well-earned reputation as a CompuBox favorite. Quartey wasn't hurting Phillips, but he was jabbing

PHOTO BY CHRIS GRAYTHEN/GETTY IMAGES

Quartey (right) comes off a long layoff to edge Phillips

extremely well and almost doubling Phillips' punch output.

Phillips started to re-establish himself in the eighth, landing a sizzling left hook to the jaw early on, though Quartey was busier and landed more punches overall. For the first minute or so of the ninth, Quartey was in complete control, wobbling Phillips with a chopping right hand. But as we all know, one punch can change everything in boxing, and control was seized dramatically by Phillips when a sudden left hook dropped Quartey hard. For the Ghanaian, it was an instantaneous flashback to the late rounds of his fights with Oscar De La Hoya and Jose Luis Lopez, battles in which he was dropped late and barely survived. The experience of those bouts served Quartey well, though, as he held and held and held, preventing Phillips from landing a punch for the next 30 seconds. Eventually, though, Phillips did get through with more heavy powershots, but Quartey stayed on his feet—until a counter left knocked Quartey down with mere seconds remaining before the bell. Referee Randy Phillips (USA) mistakenly ruled it a slip, however, a call that would prove hugely important.

The fight seemed up for grabs entering the 10th, and Phillips, 38-11-1 (20), opened aggressively, looking to follow up on his advantage from the previous stanza. But Quartey rallied in the final seconds, making the pivotal round a difficult one to score.

In the final tallies, Alex McCullum had it 96-93, and Bruce Foster and Gerald Deming both had it 95-94, all for Quartey. THE RING actually had Phillips ahead, 95-94. If the ref had made the right call at the end of the ninth, giving Phillips a 10-7 round, the bout would have been a draw. Regardless, Quartey, 36-2-1 (30), showed quite a bit considering he spent half a decade away from the game, and can almost certainly factor into the title picture at 154 pounds.

Television: HBO

Promoters: Goossen-Tutor Promotions, Star Boxing, DiBella Entertainments, Banner Promotions

(6-18-05)

Scott Harrison KO 4 Michael Brodie

Manchester, England: On the biggest weekend of the year for British boxing, Harrison, 126, Cambuslang, Scotland, was made to withstand more punches than he might have cared to take, but the brutal punishment he meted out to Brodie, 126, Manchester, England, proved overwhelming in an exciting scrap for the WBO featherweight title. The all-British clash whetted the appetite for Ricky Hatton's challenge of world junior welterweight champion Kostya Tszyu, which took place just over 24 hours later, also at the MEN Arena.

World lightweight champion Diego Corrales was ringside. So were Joe Calzaghe and Jeff Lacy, super middleweights who could clash later this year. Winky Wright, the world junior middleweight champion, was also on hand. A worthy fight was anticipated. Brodie, 35-3-1 (22), had engaged in one of the best fights of last year when he and Injin Chi of Korea fought to a standstill and could not be separated by the judges after 12 rounds. But in the rematch, the Manchester fighter was stopped in seven rounds. An unfortunate loser by split decision in 2000 when he challenged Willie Jorrin for the WBC super bantamweight belt, the prevailing thought was that Brodie might just not have enough left in the tank for a fighter of Harrison's strength and caliber.

Brodie had revealed in advance that a defeat would finish his career, but he did not go easily, withstanding a furious assault by the 27-year-old Scot in the opening round that had him reeling around the ring. Twice Harrison rocked him with overhand rights and once with the left hook. For Brodie, the bell did not come a moment too soon.

But he managed to turn the fight around completely in the second round, attacking Harrison's body and catching his exposed jaw with sharp left hooks. It was now a slugfest and a test of will. Brodie continued to have the upper hand in round three, softening Harrison further with a left hook to the body and another left hook to the chin. But a bodyshot by Harrison late in the round swung the fight his way again—permanently, as it turned out.

Harrison, 24-2-2 (14), launched a brutal body attack at the start of the fourth round that forced Brodie to yield ground. Harrison stayed on top, but Brodie bravely punched with him. Then a left hook that landed just below Brodie's ribs put the Mancunian on the floor, and by the time referee Mickey Vann (England) had tolled seven, it was clear that he was not getting back up. The count reached 10 just 46 seconds into the round.

PHOTO BY ALEX LIVESEY/GETTY IMAGES

Harrison clocks Brodie with a left hook

"I've done my best throughout my career and now I'm 31," said Brodie, his eyes puffy and purple-blotched. "I have two kids, another one on the way, and I want to see them all grow up. That's it for me. I'm a proud man. You've seen the end of me."

For Harrison, talk of his future revolved around two Mexicans. "I'd love to fight Juan Manuel Marquez (the WBA and IBF featherweight titlist) and Marco Antonio Barrera (the WBC super featherweight king)," declared Harrison, whose momentum is carrying him seemingly toward a fight with Marquez. This fight was televised in America by Showtime, whose vice president of sports programming, Jay Larkin, is keen to stage the alphabet unification fight. "We want to get the best fighters together, and a fight between Harrison and Marquez is one we want to see," Larkin revealed.

Promoter: Sports Network
(6-3-05)
Brian Doogan

Tomasz Adamek W 12 Paul Briggs

Chicago, Illinois: Relishing his party-spoiler status in front of a largely Polish-American crowd gathered in the United Center, Briggs, 175, Gold Coast, Australia, showed heart in his 12-round duel with Adamek, 175, Bielsko Biala, Poland—but heart wasn't quite enough to win him the decision in a sensationally bloody fight. Instead, it was crowd favorite Adamek who eked out the majority verdict and captured the vacant WBC title that had been stripped from Antonio Tarver for taking a major fight against Glen Johnson last December instead of a minor fight against mandatory challenger Briggs.

In the second round, Briggs sustained a deep gash next to his left eye after an accidental headbutt. After the ring doctor determined that the fight could continue, Briggs came out aggressively to begin the third round, connecting with several hard punches. By round's end, Adamek's left eye showed signs of swelling.

The bout featured two fighters with contrasting styles. Adamek exhibited patience as he relied on an arsenal of jabs, while Briggs clearly threw the more powerful punches. Overall, Adamek was the more active of the two fighters.

The cut next to Briggs' eye remained a vulnerability over the course of the fight. As he sought to protect the cut, his opponent seemed equally determined to exploit it with his persistent left jab.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Adamek fires a left at Briggs in thrilling bloodbath

The eighth round was quite possibly the best of the fight, especially in terms of the number of punches the fighters landed. All three of the judges scored the round in the 29-year-old Aussie's favor, and by the end of the ninth, two of the three judges had Briggs ahead in the fight. But Adamek, 28, came on in the championship rounds and, to the delight of the crowd, pulled it out.

"I felt I rocked him every round," said Briggs, whose record fell to 23-2 (17). "I caught a lot of his powerpunches with my gloves. He was a good fighter. He put together good combinations."

Judge John McCarthy (USA) scored the fight 115-113, and John Keane (England) scored it 117-113, both for Adamek. Judge Nobuaki Uratani (Japan) saw it 114-114. THE RING had it 115-113 for Briggs. The referee was Tim Adams (USA).

"This was my best fight ever," Adamek, 29-0 (20), said. "Briggs was a strong, tough fighter, but I was never going to give up."

Rumors of a meeting with between Adamek and Thomas Ulrich swirl about, but a rematch with Briggs seems like a strong possibility too.

Promoter: Don King Productions
(5-21-05)
Joseph Hoff

Alejandro Garcia KO 9 Rhoshii Wells

Chicago, Illinois: Scoring knockdowns in rounds eight and nine, former "regular" (non-"super") WBA super welterweight beltholder Garcia, 154, Tijuana, Mexico, knocked out Wells, 154, Las Vegas, Nevada, just as he had 20 months earlier, winning yet another bogus and meaningless WBA title, the "interim" super welterweight belt.

This fight, like their first one, was a close, back-and-forth battle. Using his speed, savvy, and sharp jab, the 28-year-old Wells did well in the early rounds. The hard-punching 25-year-old Garcia endured the early difficulty, kept the fight close, and then launched a powerful attack in the eighth and ninth rounds.

The fight was particularly memorable for the intensity of its eighth round. Garcia knocked Wells down early in the round. The 1996 Olympian got up and hurt Garcia with a hook. As he struggled to put on the finishing touches, Wells took a hard shot from Garcia at the end of the round. Heading into the ninth, two judges had Garcia narrowly ahead, while one judge had Wells on top.

In the ninth round, the referee Pete Podgorski: (USA) had to warn both fighters for hitting low. But Garcia kept his punches up after that and made them count, landing a series of right hands that went unanswered by Wells. Podgorski intervened and stopped the fight with eight seconds remaining in the ninth round.

"I didn't know how the referee stopped the fight," said Wells, 18-2-2 (10). "He should have let it go. I want to fight Garcia for a third time."

Garcia improved his record to 24-1 (24), with his only loss coming via somewhat controversial knockout to Travis Simms.

"Wells moves a lot," Garcia said. "He is a good puncher, but he cannot handle my power."

At the press conference afterward, Garcia expressed his wish to fight former welterweight champ Cory Spinks, who is preparing to invade the 154-pound ranks.

Promoter: Don King Productions
(5-21-05)
Joseph Hoff

Mikkel Kessler W 12 Anthony Mundine

Sydney, Australia: After watching the fall of a national idol just days before when Kostya Tszyu surrendered the world junior welterweight title to Ricky Hatton thousands of miles away, Australia's sports-loving populace endured further disappointment when Kessler, 167½, Copenhagen, Denmark, repelled the challenge of Mundine, 166¾, Sydney, Australia, to retain the WBA super middleweight title for the first time, at the Sydney Entertainment Centre. Mundine, who recently announced plans to resume his rugby career while also continuing to box, is a former holder of this title.

Intriguingly, Mundine lost the belt, by a split decision, to the fighter from whom Kessler seized it, Manny Siaca. The Puerto Rican was stopped by the man they call "The Viking" in the eighth round last year. So this matchup was interesting. Would Mundine's suspect chin take the same punches from Kessler's heavy hands? Could he raise his game as he had failed to do against Siaca and outwork the Dane? Was his mind 100 percent on the job after recently stating his desire to return to rugby?

Mundine dispelled a lot of these doubts, staying with Kessler, 36-0 (27), all the way, making him miss a lot of his heavier shots, and breaking up the Dane's rhythm with his fast hands. A promising start by the challenger yielded him two rounds right at the start. Kessler was unable to nail him with his big punch until the third, when he got through with a left hook. Mundine took it well. His jab was efficient and kept Kessler at a comfortable distance, preventing him from moving into close range where he might have done damage.

By round four, Kessler was starting to figure out the answers to the problems Mundine was posing him. For the first time, he was able to cut off the ring, trap the Aussie in corners, and unload powerful punches in combination. Mundine slipped many of them, but not all.

In the middle rounds, Kessler took over, utilizing a stiff jab and landing a succession of hurtful right crosses. Mundine responded in the ninth, banging in a solid right cross of his own that shook Kessler and gave the Australian renewed confidence. He whipped in a couple of fast combinations that drew the near-capacity crowd to its feet. But Kessler regained the initiative by concentrating his attack to the body in the 10th, hurting Mundine with several big hooks.

The challenger still believed he was in the fight and, determined to mount a strong finish, threw combinations with gusto in the 12th and final round. Referee Luis Pabon (Puerto Rico) had little to do in a fight that was sportingly as well as fiercely contested throughout. Kessler traded with Mundine, 23-3 (18), and the rousing finish capped a compelling bout.

The judging was wildly erratic. Henk Meijers (Netherlands) scored every round for Kessler on his 120-108 scorecard, which was wrong. Hubert Earle (Canada) had it closest at 116-112 for Kessler (the same as THE RING), while Takeshi Shimakawa (Japan) also saw it for the defending titlist by a score of 117-113.

"It would be great to think there could be a rematch, if he's willing to give it to me," said Mundine. "I personally thought the fight was a lot closer than it was scored and I think Mikkel knows that too."

Kessler suggested he would be willing to give Mundine another shot. "Of course, now I know how to beat him," Kessler said. "It was a hard fight, a good fight."

Promoter: Khoder Nasser, in association with Bettina Palle

(6-8-05)

Brian Doogan

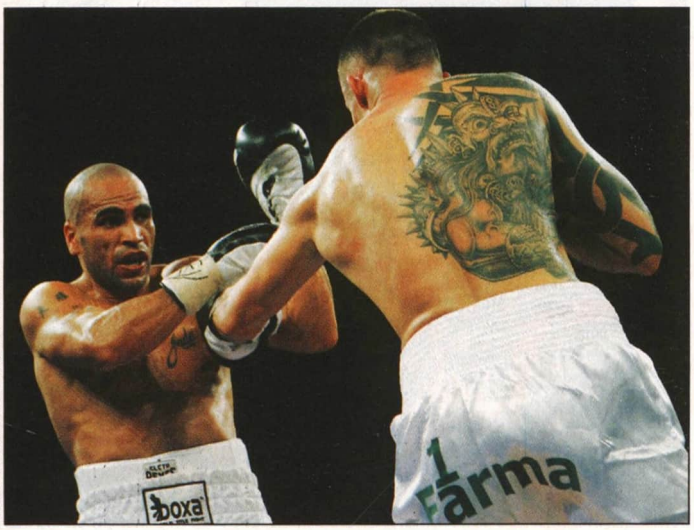


PHOTO BY CHRIS MCGRATH/GETTY IMAGES

Kessler jabs at Mundine en route to decision victory

O'Neil Bell W 12 Dale Brown

Hollywood, Florida: According to the cliche, the third time is supposed to be the charm. But Brown, having already failed in two tries for cruiserweight titles, has never been more cursed than he was following his third attempt.

The Canadian veteran wobbled Bell badly in the third round, controlled the second half of the bout, and seemed to do more than enough to earn the decision win after 12 rounds, but the judges thought otherwise, awarding a nearly impossible-to-figure unanimous decision to prefight favorite Bell. Michael Pernick's 115-113 scorecard for Bell was dubious but vaguely conceivable, but Robert Hoyle's 116-112 card and Rich Green's 117-111 tally were utterly incomprehensible. THE RING had Brown winning by 116-112.

This clash at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino was for the vacant IBF 200-pound belt, which was stripped earlier this year from Kelvin Davis. Considering how Brown had been stopped in both of his previous title shots, against Vassiliy Jirov and Jean-Marc Mormeck, not to mention in a non-title bout with Wayne Braithwaite, the streaking boxer-puncher Bell was expected to win comprehensively. He had a decent second round, landing numerous clean bodyshots and opening a cut between Brown's eyes, but in the third, Brown, 198¾, Calgary, Alberta, dished out a beating. A soft-looking left hook to the temple hurt Bell, 199, Atlanta, Georgia, early in the stanza, and he staggered all around the ring as Brown followed up. Just when Bell seemed to be getting his legs back, Brown hurt him again with two overhand rights. Bell, 30, spent so much of the round looking like he was about to go down that a 10-8 score in favor of the 33-year-old Brown wouldn't have been unreasonable.

Bell staged an impressive comeback in round four, slicing Brown open just outside of his left eye, and he may have gotten the better of the close fifth and sixth as well. But it was almost all Brown after that. In the seventh, he mixed strong bodyshots with some noteworthy jabbing and boxing. He landed a couple of good hooks in the eighth, as Bell looked increasingly like a fighter who just didn't have it on this night. After an aggressive spurt in the 10th, Bell looked highly weary, and in the 11th, Brown stiffened Bell's legs again with a right hand. The 12th round could have

been scored either way, but it didn't seem to matter much at that point.

Sadly, it didn't matter for all the wrong reasons. Bell, 24-1-1 (22), was already too far ahead to lose. If the IBF has any sense of fairness (a longshot, we know), they'll make sure that the hard-luck Brown, 32-4-1 (20), gets an immediate rematch.

The referee was Armando Garcia (USA).

Television: ESPN2

Promoter: Warriors Boxing

(5-20-05)

Martin Castillo W 12 Hideyasu Ishihara

Nagoya, Japan: Slick Mexican Castillo, 114½, solidified his standing atop the 115-pound division and retained the WBA belt as he outclassed and outpunched bull-like Japanese southpaw challenger Ishihara, 115, over 12 hard-fought rounds. Castillo was the clear winner, but it wasn't easy, due to Ishihara's durability and determination.

It looked like a battle of a matador and a bull as Castillo, making his second defense, cleverly outmaneuvered Ishihara. It was also a grudge fight. In their first encounter, in May '04, Castillo was behind on points after the 10th round, but scored a devastating one-punch stoppage over the taller lefty in the 11th.

Having defeated such name opponents as Alexander Munoz and Eric Morel since, Castillo appeared confident from the start. The 28-year-old Mexican battered the high-guarded challenger's body and moved side-to-side to win the first three rounds with ease, while Ishihara, 29, kept coming forward and throwing strong but inaccurate southpaw lefts at the elusive titlist. Ishihara's aggressiveness accelerated in the fourth, and Castillo was suddenly moving backward, focusing on defense and occasional counterpunching.

Castillo continued retreating in the fifth, but countered well with right-left combinations and solid bodyshots. It was in this round that Ishihara's right eye began to swell from Castillo's left hooks. But in round six, Castillo was penalized a point for repeated low blows, drawing the Japanese fighter a bit closer on the scorecards. The Mexican sustained a gash over the left eyebrow in the seventh, but his cutman, Miguel Diaz, controlled it, and Castillo was in charge in the eighth and ninth.

Moving to-and-fro and side-to-side, Castillo kept catching the game but monotonous southpaw with sharp, precise shots. Ishihara, 16-4-1 (11), was visibly slowing down, especially in the last three rounds. He continued throwing punches, but failed to catch the moving target cleanly, and his right eye was nearly closed by the end of the affair.

In the end, judges Cesar Ramos (Puerto Rico) and Pinit Prayadsab (Thailand) both had it 116-111, and Mikael Hook (Sweden) saw it 116-112, all for the technically excellent Castillo. The referee was Stanley Christodoulou (South Africa).

Castillo, 28-1 (16), jubilantly said afterward, "Ishihara was brave, but I gave him a lesson and kept piling up points to prove who the champ is."

Promoters: Matsuda Promotions, Teiken Promotions

(6-26-05)

Joe Koizumi

Leavander Johnson KO 7 Stefano Zoff

Milan, Italy: Perseverance pays. After three failed attempts to win an alphabet title at 135 pounds, Johnson, 134¼, Atlantic City, New Jersey, finally prevailed 16 years after his pro debut when he stopped fellow veteran Zoff, 134¼, Monfalcone, Italy, in the seventh round to claim the IBF lightweight title at the Palalido Palace. The title was made vacant, and devalued considerably, when Julio Diaz gave it up in order to challenge Jose Luis Castillo in March.

Losing the big one had always been the now-35-year-old Johnson's fate. In 1994, he challenged Miguel Angel Gonzalez for the WBC title and was stopped in the eighth round. Three years later, he was stopped in seven rounds by Orzubek Nazarov, then the WBA titleholder. Then, two years ago, he was outlasted by another veteran, Javier Jauregui, in a crowd-pleasing brawl for the vacant IBF title at L.A.'s Olympic Auditorium. (Jauregui subsequently lost the strap to Diaz.) But Johnson was confident of bucking the trend against Zoff. "I haven't come over here for a holiday," he said with a smile.

Zoff insisted that he was "ready for battle," but, at 39, it was natural to suspect that maybe this was one battle too far. Six years ago, he had stopped Julien Lorcy in La Cannet, France, to win the WBA lightweight title, but lost in his first defense, against Gilberto Serrano in Las Vegas. In the meantime, he had picked up the European title, vacated it to face Johnson, and was filled with a strong conviction that he would win in a historic venue where the likes of Vito Antuofermo and Duilio Loi had fought before him.

Despite their combined 74 years in age, Johnson and Zoff produced plenty of action. Standing toe-to-toe, they traded punch for punch, Johnson, 34-4-2 (26), getting through with some solid right hands early, Zoff, 43-10-2 (17), retaliating with hooks and uppercuts. But the Italian has never been a heavy hitter, and Johnson's blows increasingly made the greater impact. Still, there was not much between them as the fight entered the halfway stage.

But in the seventh, the years caught up with Zoff, and so did Johnson. A combination of rights and lefts floored him, and referee Sam Williams stopped the fight moments later as it became clear that Zoff was in no position to defend himself.

"I'm absolutely delighted. It's taken me a long time, but the feeling I have at this moment has surely been worth waiting for," said Johnson.

(6-17-05)

Brian Doogan ■

PHOTO AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Castillo kept the WBA belt and won a trophy by beating Ishihara

New Face

(Continued from page 22)

sweet trip to the 2000 Olympic Trials in Colorado, where he lost to Dante Craig in the welterweight semifinals.

Despite falling short at the Trials, a loss Derek attributes to fighting in the thin Rocky Mountain air, his future looked bright. But he also understood that an education in the ring was no substitute for an academic education. So after just 19 amateur bouts, he turned professional and enrolled at Cheney University, where he currently needs 15 credits to get his B.A. in Business Administration (with a minor in Criminal Science).

While upholding a boxing and academic career is admirable, it didn't generate very much income. So between his standing commitments as boxer and student, Ennis found time to work as a tutor at the Germantown Settlement, an after-school program that emphasizes academic achievement for inner-city children.

But as busy as Derek is, both he and Bozy would like to see him get even busier inside the ring. Somewhat surprisingly, Ennis has had trouble finding a steady supply of opponents in Philly, a city renowned for its tough fighters. Despite turning pro in 2002, Ennis had only had seven pro fights as of July 2005.

"Derek should be at least 12-0. But the boys in Philly all know him and they don't want to fight him," Bozy lamented.

Anyone who has seen Derek fight can understand why a handful of scheduled opponents have pulled a Houdini—even as late as the weigh-in. His hit-and-move style makes fighting him frustrating, and frequently embarrassing, for opponents. And his fast, accurate counterpunches often hurt opponents as thoroughly as they confound them.

"Derek has tremendous natural ability, things you can't teach," said Rich Cappiello, a Massachusetts-based promoter who has known Bozy for years. "He can slip a punch and anticipate things like a veteran. He has great poise for such a young fighter."

Ennis can also switch from conventional to southpaw while landing powerpunches in bunches before opponents can return fire. The dazzling display of speed and elusiveness has caused several opponents to quit on their stools.

Of course, the downside to showcasing those skills is that few fighters are willing to risk the embarrassment for the modest purse available for four- and six-round fights. But even though his skills are scaring off prospective foes, there is still one element of Derek's game that Bozy would like to see him improve upon.

"I'd like to see him relax, and sit down on his punches more," Bozy said. "He has good power. But once he settles down, the power will come because he can just let his hands go. He's got fast hands now, and once he relaxes, more knockouts will come."

Philadelphia-based promoter Greg Robinson, on whose cards Ennis has appeared, agrees, but adds that as Derek progresses to eight-and 10-round fights, the stiffer competition will force him alter his approach.

"Right now, Derek's winning rounds and winning fights, which is good," said Robinson. "But as he fights better opponents, I think he'll have to take some more chances in the ring. I also think he'll be able to get more knockouts in later rounds because he'll be able to wear his opponents down over a longer fight."

With quality rounds at a premium, his team understands how critical it is to Derek's career that they find him more regular and progressively challenging work—even if it means stepping outside to the City of Brotherly Love to do so.

"Philly's a great fight town. Lots of good fighters and lots of good fights to be made," Cappiello said. "But sometimes great Philly fighters never get out of Philly, and that can hurt them. So I think it's very important Derek finds a promoter and regular opponents. You can't make it going fight to fight."

Bozy, for his part, has shown that he and his charge are ready, willing, and able to hit the road for the right fight. In fact, the born and bred Philadelphian has already fought in Boston and Fort Worth, Texas, during his amateur days. And a number of promoters have shown an interest in signing Derek to a long-term agreement.

"Robinson and Cappiello want to sign Derek, and we also started talking with Golden Boy Promotions," claimed Bozy. "But we have to be patient. Our time is gonna come, because the promoters who've seen Derek know he can fight."

No matter who ends up promoting Derek, Bozy is convinced his son is destined for greatness.

"I think my son could go out there right now and beat any junior middleweight champ," said Bozy. "He made Kasim Ouma look like the challenger in sparring."

Derek, on the other hand, could have other plans. For example, he claims he's not long for the junior middleweight ranks. He wants to drop down to welterweights. "It's my natural weight," Derek said

Outside the ring, Derek's path could wind in several directions. Going to college is all about creating options for yourself, and sooner or later, he'll probably want to put that biz-admin degree to good use. But right now, Derek definitely sees boxing in both his immediate and long-term plans. Don't be surprised, however, if you don't detect that sense of desperation in his voice common to many boxers. Unlike other young men who turn to boxing as a means to avoid trouble, Derek doesn't see the sport as his salvation. He's never had to.

"I do this because I want to," Derek explained. "I love boxing. It's what I love to do. I do it, I guess, because it can make me rich. Before my career's over, I'd like to win a few titles and be able to support my family." ■

Frank Krewda is a freelance writer from Philadelphia.

FLASHBACK

Through The Years With "The Bible Of Boxing"

FEBRUARY 1963

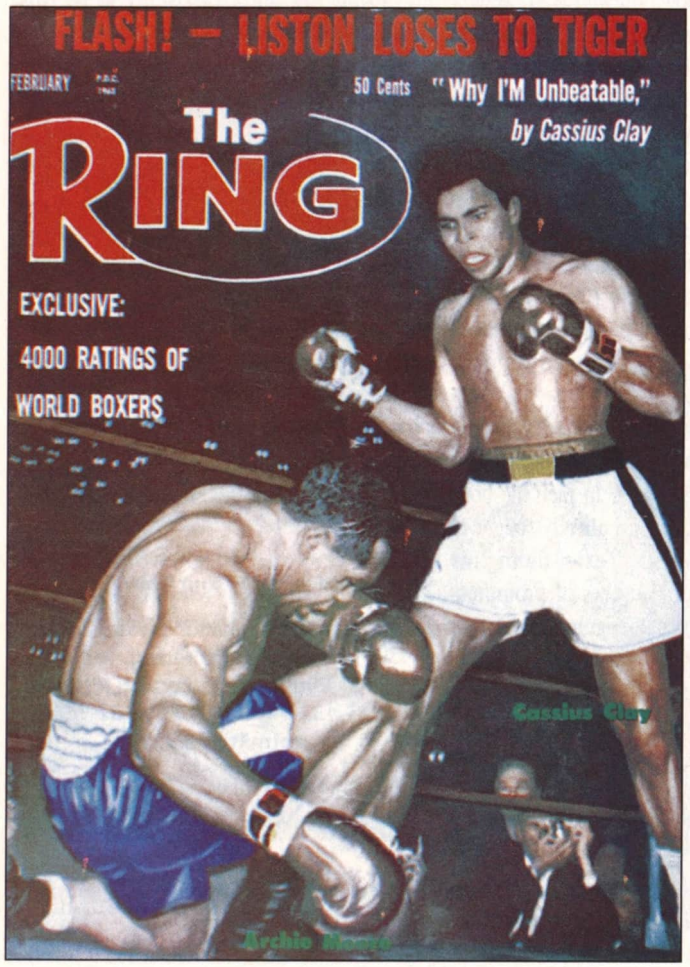
COVER STORY: "Why I'm Unbeatable." THE RING allowed a rising young heavyweight star to voice his opinion in a feature that carried the byline: By Cassius Clay (Heavyweight Contender) as told to Nat Loubet. Among other things, Clay informed readers why he's so good … and so pretty.

"I like to fool around. I like to josh and needle, play practical jokes. But underneath all of that lies a very serious vein. When I tell you that I am going to be heavyweight champion of the world, I am not joking," Clay told Loubet.

Clay maintained that his boisterous bragging helped keep his name in the news.

"Some people figure I am too loud. Well, I may be that. But who listens to a whisper? Boxing is badly in need of colorful fighters who can back up their mouths with their fists.

"This type of fighter used to be a tremendous force in the old ballyhoo. The promoters seem to have lost the ballyhoo knack. I want to revive it—of course, with the ability to make my claims and predictions stand up."



After only 16 pro fights, Clay was certain he was preordained for greatness.

"I figure that I am a Man of Destiny. I felt that way when I won the Olympic light heavyweight title in 1960, and I have that feeling now more than ever. I believe that I am invincible."

Invincible? Well, not quite, but damned near. One year after this story appeared, Clay got his chance to "shock the world," when he won the heavyweight championship by forcing highly favored Sonny Liston to quit on his stool. In fact, the man who would soon become Muhammad Ali already knew how he would accomplish what most experts thought was next to impossible.

"I know how to beat the slow-moving, flatfooted Liston. I am convinced that a fighter with speed, with a punch and guts, and the knowledge how to use both these assets, can beat Liston. I would make Liston think he was fighting 10 guys."

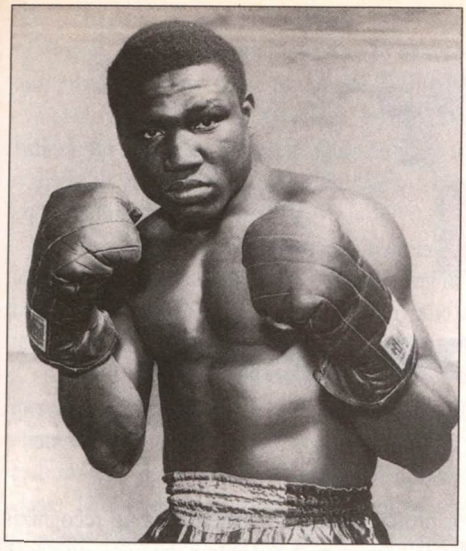
It's weird when you think about it now, but when this article was published, hardly anybody believed him!

"Fighter Of The Year" Since 1928, THE RING had proclaimed a

WORLD CHAMPIONS

(for the period ended December 20, 1962)

Heavyweight: Sonny Liston
Light Heavyweight: Harold Johnson
Middleweight: Dick Tiger
Welterweight: Emile Griffith
Junior Welterweight: Duillo Loi
Lightweight: Carlos Ortiz
Junior Lightweight: Flash Elorde
Featherweight: Davey Moore
Bantamweight: Eder Jofre
Flyweight: Fighting Harada



Tiger was **The Ring's** *1962 Fighter of the Year*

Fighter of the Year, starting with Gene Tunney. The lineup of candidates for 1962 was particularly impressive, with future Hall of Famers Sonny Liston, Carlos Ortiz, Fighting Harada, Emile Griffith, and Clay in the running. But THE RING selected another eventual Hall of Famer for top honors, middleweight champion Dick Tiger. The Nigerian's biggest victory in '62 was the battering he gave Gene Fullmer to annex the middleweight crown.

"Fight Of The Year" THE RING's choice for Fight of the Year wasn't a title fight, but rather a bruising bout between ranked middleweights Joey Giardello and Henry Hank. Fighting before a hometown crowd of 5,867 in Philadelphia, Giardello received a majority decision, though he was covered practically from head to toe in blood at the conclusion. Before the fight, both Giardello and Hank were promised that the winner would face Ray Robinson next. But the way things worked out, Giardello had to wait until June '64, when he won a 10-round decision over the faded Sugar Ray.

"Round Of The Year" THE RING, through its Selection Committee headed by editor Nat Fleischer, decided unanimously that Sonny Liston's first-round kayo of Floyd Patterson was the top round of the year. While it was certainly a highly significant round, due to the fact that the heavyweight tile was on the line, from a competitive point of view the September 25 slaughter was a dud, lasting a mere 126 seconds.

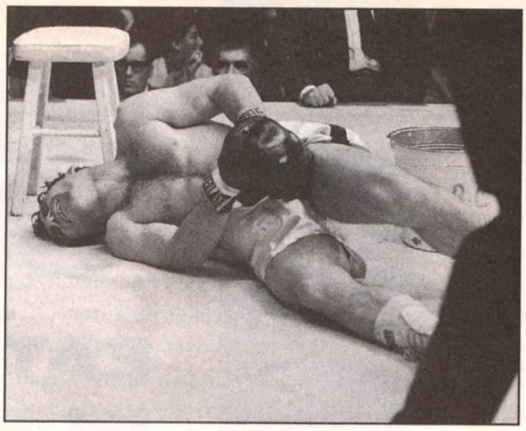
"Emile Griffith Wins In Controversial Welter Title Fight With Jorge Fernandez" Two fights after his tragic confrontation with Benny "Kid" Paret, welterweight champion Emile Griffith climbed back into the ring to defend the title against Argentina's Jorge Fernandez.

Griffith stopped Fernandez in the ninth, but the fight ended in controversy when Griffith hit Fernandez low. The no-foul rule was in effect, and in the opinion of ringside doctor Donald Romero, Fernandez was able to continue. Since Fernandez refused to go on, the bout ended with Griffith being awarded a TKO.

The Fernandez camp angrily called in vain for Griffith to be disqualified, but the result stuck.

"They Call Me Professor" In another as-told-to article, welterweight contender Luis Rodriguez bragged about his dancing ability, claiming he knew "more dance steps than Arthur Murray and his wife." Rodriguez could have also been called "The Survivor." He was one of 32 passengers aboard a highjacked plane that was flown to Cuba in July 1961. Rodriguez, a Cuban who had fled his native land when Fidel Castro outlawed professional boxing, was in a particularly tricky situation. But he and the other passengers were returned safely to Miami, Florida, a few hours later.

The delay forced Rodriguez to postpone a fight in Texas against Curtis Cokes. They fought a week later, with Cokes winning. Rodriguez, however, avenged the loss in Miami, without any unscheduled delays, in December 1961. ■



Fernandez writhes on the canvas at the conclusion of the Griffith fight

Rodriguez: A man of many talents

The first round of Liston-Patterson was Round of the Year

THE FIGHT DOCTOR

EATING DISORDERS IN BOXING

By Margaret Goodman, MD

Anyone who has worked around the sports of professional and amateur boxing recognizes that dietary restrictions are a part of life. Almost as soon as a kid enters the gym, his coach is not only assessing his or her jab, but also at which weight class the boxer should compete. It is at this time an obsession with food and body weight often begins, mainly because there is an unfounded belief throughout the sport that a competitive edge is gained from a low body weight.

Eating disorders are no joke. They are recognized as psychiatric illnesses and clinically defined by certain criteria that go beyond weight and body image. Eating disorders include:

•Anorexia nervosa: the refusal to maintain normal body weight, intense fear of weight gain, and disturbance in how we see our own body or shape.

•Bulimia nervosa: binge eating along with inappropriate behavior, including fasting, vomiting, use of laxatives, and excessive exercise to prevent weight gain.

•Chronic binge eating: frequent episodes of eating large amounts of food, feeling unable to control how much is eaten, eating more rapidly than normal, eating until abnormally full (especially when not hungry), and feelings of disgust or depression after overeating.

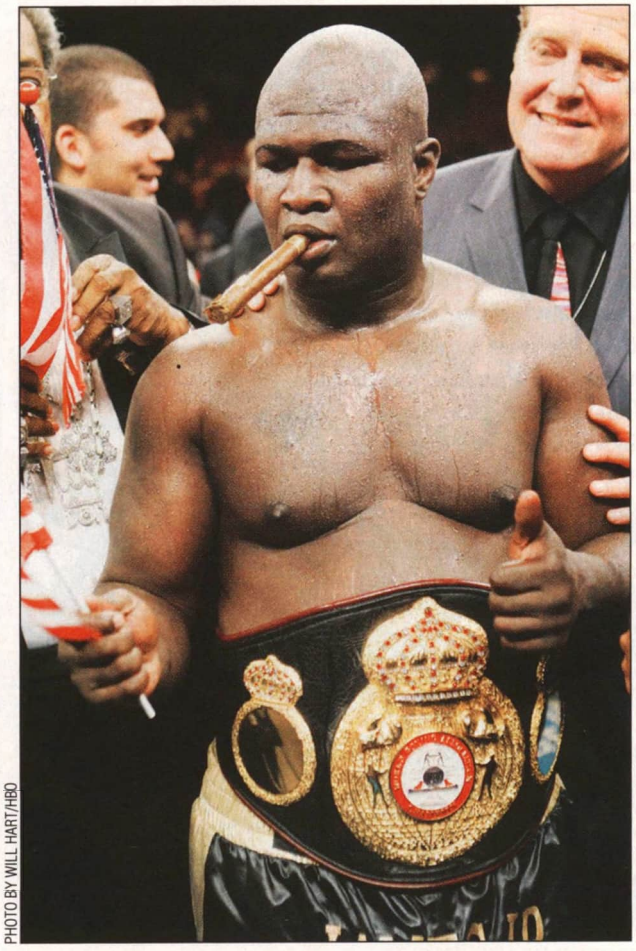


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

James Toney has battled an eating disorder throughout his career

Psychiatric illnesses, such as major depression, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, sexual abuse, and substance abuse, frequently occur in those with eating disorders.

There is considerable debate about genetic predisposition. New Jersey psychiatrist Dr. Ron Kamm, president of the International Society of Sport Psychiatry, who works with F.I.S.T., suggests that in the general population as high as 11 percent of females have some type of eating disorder, compared to one percent in males. Male athletes, however, are 10 times more at risk. Dr. Kamm believes that many boxers may have disordered eating or less severe forms of eating behavior that left untreated may lead to anorexia or bulimia.

Boxing conditioning guru Dave "Scooter" Honig agrees, saying, "All fighters have some type of eating disorder because they eat to satisfy their taste buds instead of eating for nutritional value."

Unfortunately, binging and then purging frequently becomes the easiest way for a boxer to maintain weight. Individuals who indulge in such practices are often at normal weight or slightly overweight. Binging gives them a temporary high and increases serotonin levels in the brain. Later, they feel guilty, and throw up, starve, use laxatives, enemas, or restrict fluids. Dr. Kamm believes when a fighter follows this routine long enough, it becomes a method

of coping, a comfort zone, and way to achieve a goal. As such, it also provides a false sense of control.

As a fighter's career advances, he fights less often and many balloon up in weight between fights because maintaining weight is a difficult task. Therefore, a between fights layoff frequently equals indulging in overeating.

There appears to be several risk factors for eating disorders in athletes. A significant number begin dieting at an early age on recommendation of their coach. For a young and impressionable amateur boxer, this is perceived as a requirement.

Another study showed that the risk of eating disorders increased if dieting is unsupervised and unsuitable crash diets become the norm. Training for a specific sport before the body matures can prevent the athlete from choosing the right weight class. This eventually produces a conflict whereby the athlete struggles against the natural physical changes as his or her body matures and grows.

Extreme exercise itself can put a boxer at risk for an eating disorder. Furthermore, boxers who increase their training may experience calorie deprivation, not realizing they need to eat more to maintain energy demands. A traumatic loss of a loved one or trainer can also trigger the onset of an eating disorder.

Eating or weight related issues affect a fighter spiritually, psychologically, and physically. The psychological effects include loss of concentration, feeling ineffective, low self-esteem, agitation and irritability, anxiety, fear, depression, fatigue, mood swings, and decreased motivation. In addition to heredity, genetics, and body stature, the physiologic effects of an eating related problem depend on how long the person has struggled with it.

Food equals energy, so without enough food our bodies will not perform. All organ systems are affected. Some of the most common symptoms include dizziness, fatigue, and loss of coordination, endurance, muscular strength and speed, in addition to muscle cramps and overheating.

Dehydration typically results from not drinking enough fluids. A five percent decrease in fluid consumption when a fighter is trying to make weight can reduce muscle capacity up to 30 percent. We tend to think of electrolyte imbalance resulting from dehydration, but food deprivation can lead to the medical symptoms listed above and even proceed to seizures or heart attacks.

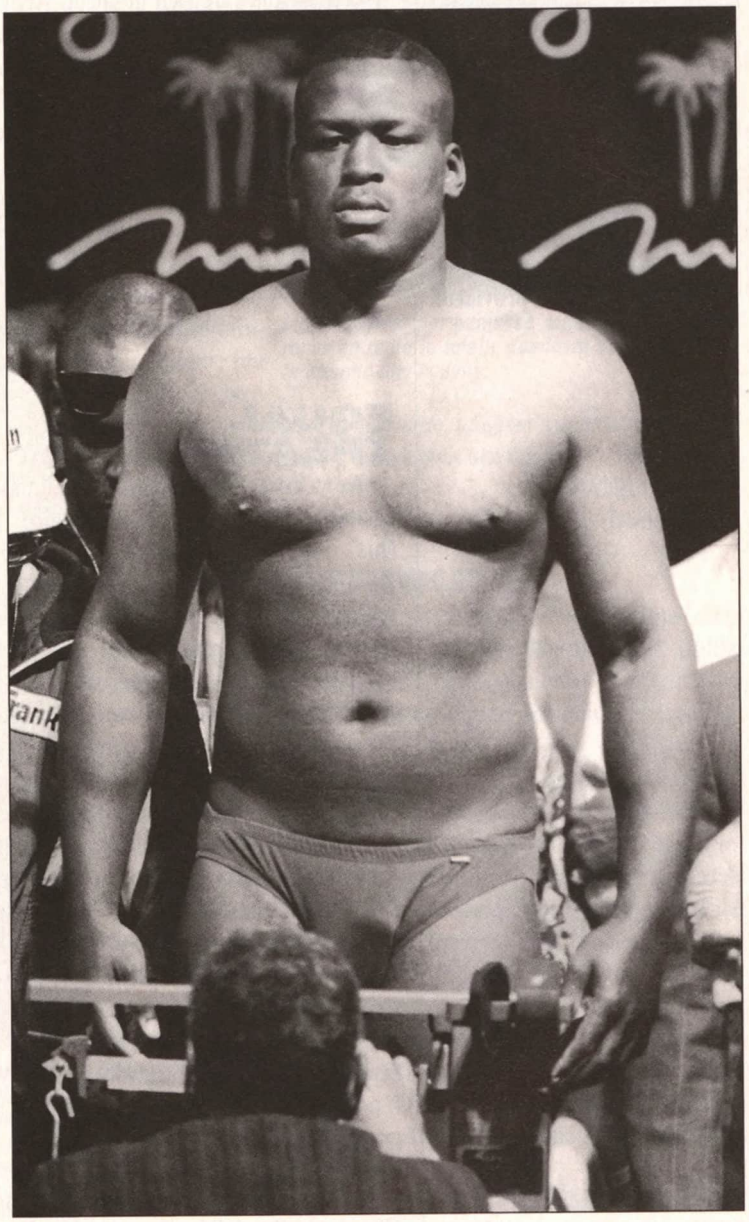
Prevention must start with the athlete's coach/trainer or parent recognizing the problem and taking it seriously. First, boxers need accurate information regarding nutrition, weight, and weight loss so they can avoid unhealthy practices. Moreover, boxers must understand that it is a myth that he or she will perform better at a lighter weight. It is also a myth that eating foods that contain fat will put on fat. Our bodies tend to keep what we don't consume. If we don't drink water, our bodies hold on to water; if we don't eat fat, our bodies will hold on to fat.

Nevada State Athletic Commissioner Dr. Flip Homansky notes, "If our fighters were encouraged to fight in the appropriate weight class early on, they wouldn't need to binge and then have to suffer dehydration and lose valuable protein to make weight."

Everybody involved in the sport, including boxers, should pay attention to symptoms of hunger and thirst. Denying those signals simply creates an unhealthy state. It is crucial for a boxer to know that needing professional help for eating disorders is not a sign of weakness. Trainers and coaches need to acknowledge that they and the demands of the sport may have contributed to the problem.

Unfortunately, most individuals with eating disorders that have tried to correct the situation have failed. "Once developed, eating disorders are tough to treat," Dr. Kamm notes. Prozac can help the boxer reduce anxiety and the compulsive element associated. Boxers can look at this behavior like steroid use, if left untreated it can hurt them and their performance." ■

Dr. Goodman will be happy to answer questions about the medical aspects of boxing in future columns. Please send inquiries to: The Fight Doctor, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034



Buster Douglas' eating disorder eventually led to a diabetic coma

COME OUT WRITING

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

FLY FANATIC

I would like to thank THE RING for the well-formulated story on Jorge Arce and his spectacular March 19 war with Hussein Hussein ("Cowboy Hats, Lollipops, And Blood: Jorge Arce Brings Reality To The Flyweight Division") in the August 2005 issue of THE RING EXTRA. I think the Arce-Hussein match exhibited the skill, talent, promise, and even marketing potential that exist in the lighter weight divisions. It's a shame that television coverage is scarce in these weight classes, especially because they are rich in talent. After all, these fighters provide way more entertainment than any heavyweight bout I've seen recently. In addition, I would like to give THE RING "two thumbs up" for its coverage of strawweight prospect Rodel Mayol and the very informative and equal coverage afforded the bantamweight, flyweight, and strawweight divisions in "The State Of The Game" segment in the same issue.

JOSEPH CARLO RUSSO
Brooklyn, NY

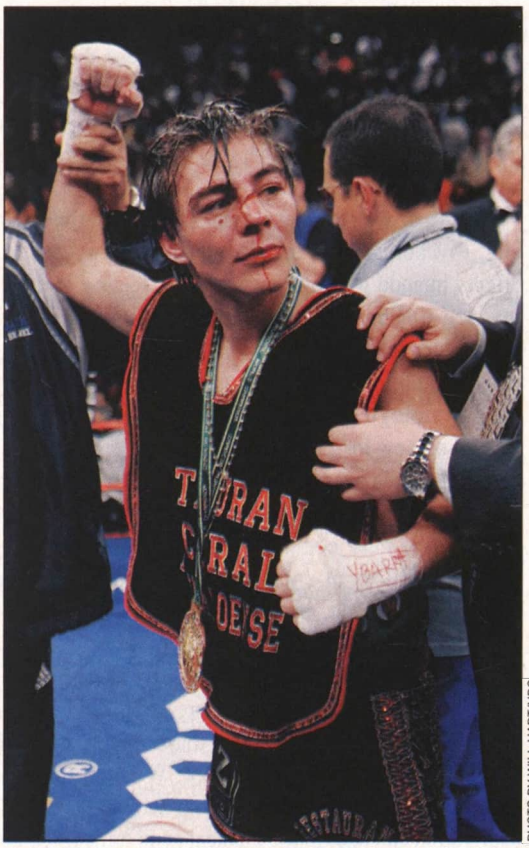


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

A blood-smeared Jorge Arce celebrates his victory over Hussein Hussein. Reader Joseph Carlo Russo not only enjoyed the fight, he was pleased to see that the August 2005 issue of* The Ring Extra *featured Arce and several other top men in the lighter-weight divisions.

EQUAL TREATMENT

New York State Athletic Commission Chairman Ron Scott Stevens claimed, "To (his) practiced mind, Evander Holyfield shouldn't be fighting anymore. It's the responsibility of the state athletic commission to save a boxer from himself ..." While I agree that Stevens made the right call with regard to Holyfield, I am curious to know what his "practiced mind" thinks about the dozens of other fighters who are in much worse shape than "The Real Deal." Case in point: Frankie Randall has fallen so far since his defeat of Julio Cesar Chavez that he continues to get knocked out by club-level fighters. Holyfield was 2-5-2 in his last nine outings. Compare that to Randall, who is 5-12 since losing his to Khalid Rahilou (and has been knocked out nine times!). Mr. Stevens, given your action toward Holyfield and position as NYSAC chairman, it is your responsibility to set an example for all others to follow. Or are only fighters who have over $50-million in the bank eligible to be suspended?

RON CHADHA
Ron_chadha@yahoo.com

[Editor's note: Stevens only has jurisdiction over fighters who box in New York State. Neither Chavez nor Randall has boxed in New York since Stevens became commissioner.]

MAGOO BACKLASH

I am writing to you about Ivan Goodman's "Digging Deep" column in the August 2005 issue of THE RING EXTRA. Goldman, writing about the Miguel Cotto-DeMarcus Corley fight in Puerto Rico, made a comment about the fight being stopped early, and wrote that the best remedy to stop these problem would be to make Puerto Rico a full-fledged state. "If Puerto Ricans had to sweat over income tax forms like everybody else," Goldman wrote, "they'd have less time to screw out-of-town fighters." As a Puerto Rican and a true RING and boxing fan, I found those comments offensive. What does our political status as a commonwealth have to do with boxing? I still love THE RING and will continue to buy it, but I feel Goldman's comments were more about his personal feelings toward Puerto Ricans than boxing.

LOUIS RAMOS
Brooklyn, NY

RIGHT ABOUT RICKY

The recent criticism directed at THE RING for recognizing Ricky Hatton as the new junior welterweight world champion has been nothing short of disgraceful. I can only assume that these ill-advised critics are non-boxing fans. THE RING does not appoint world champions, the fighters themselves decide by winning or losing fights. If a fighter challenges a champion and wins, then he becomes the new champion. Simple. Ricky Hatton is the best 140-pounder in the world because he beat the best 140-pounder in the world. And if anyone wants to claim that title, they now have to beat Hatton.

MARTIN SUPPLE
Chester, England

Ricky Hatton's victory is a reminder to all British boxing fans of the value in THE RING's championship policy. The contest has been a wonderful success for boxing here because the public knew that it was a real world title fight, not for the XYZ belt.

BARRIE READER
Surrey, England

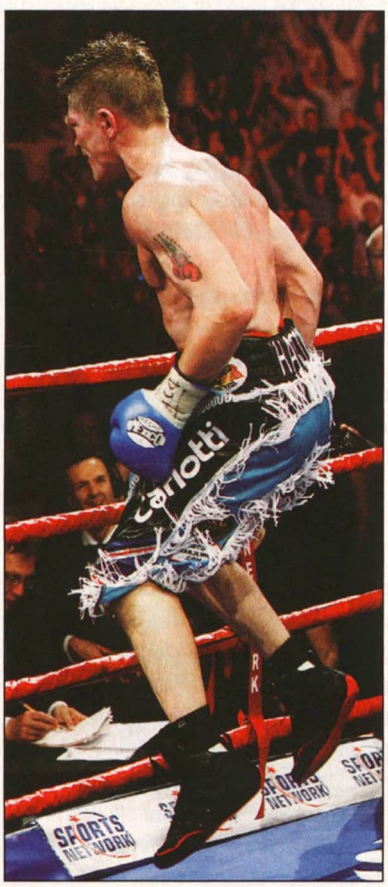


PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Ricky Hatton jumps for joy after stopping Kostya Tszyu. Among the many who wrote to comment on Hatton's impressive victory were Martin Supple and Barrie Reader, both of whom emphasized the importance of* The Ring's *junior welterweight championship belt Ricky won as being emblematic of a true champion.

PUMPKIN MAN

Although Jimmy Braddock had far fewer inherent ring skills than Mike Tyson, his career both inside and outside the ring inspired the film *Cinderella Man*. Iron Mike's career has been *Cinderella Man* in reverse. What a waste of boxing talent and human potential. What a tragedy!

ROBERT A. MOHLER
San Francisco, CA

IN A LEAGUE OF HIS OWN

Floyd Mayweather has got to be one of the greatest boxers of all-time. Most boxing experts agreed that Floyd would beat Arturo Gatti, but he not only won the fight, he completely destroyed Gatti. Floyd is the greatest fighter I have ever seen.

KELSEY McCARSON
Austin, TX

WHAT DID YOU EXPECT?

The Mayweather-Gatti fight went down just the way anyone who has been paying attention thought it would. There is a world of difference between these guys' boxing ability. Gatti is an entertaining fighter, but he has never been in Mayweather's class. In the future, a fighter's entertainment value should not lead to making mismatches like this one.

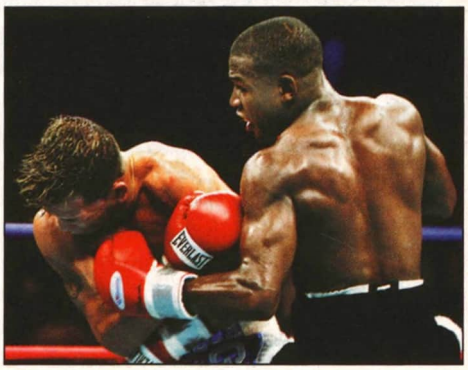


PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Floyd Mayweather punishes Arturo Gatti along the ropes en route to totally dominant sixth-round TKO in Atlantic City in June.

FRANK GANNON
Demorest, GA

FITTING TRIBUTE

I was very moved by Joe Santoliquito's "Round One" item about Becky Zerlentes, the amateur who died this year. Unlike other coverage of Zerlentes's death, namely in *The New York Times*, the piece didn't use the tragedy to cast doubt on the organization or validity of women's boxing as a whole. Mr. Santoliquito had the advantage of having his deadline after autopsy results were in, of course, when it could be said with certainty that this was a freakish occurrence that could not have been prevented by more rigorous attention by USA Boxing's medical staff or other officials. Even so, Mr. Santoliquito could have used the opportunity to further incite controversy over women's boxing. Instead, he did the honorable thing, and wrote a factual and informative account of the circumstances and a tribute to a woman and the sport she loved. I'm sure somehow she is aware of this and is thrilled to have made an appearance in THE RING, though perhaps a bit sad that it wasn't for a different reason. I'm new participant in the sport and a new subscriber to your venerable publication, and I'm enjoying it immensely.

EMILY VOTRUBA
Brooklyn, NY ■

LOOKING AHEAD

By Joe Santoliquito

REMATCH-ARAMA

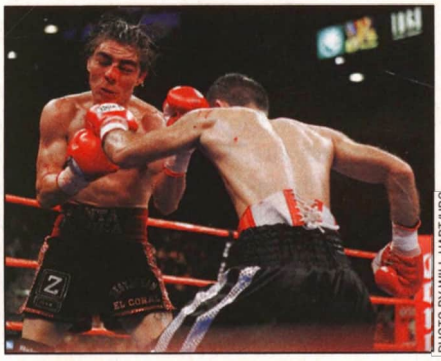


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Who wouldn't want to see Arce and Hussein again?

The **Diego Corrales-Jose Luis Castillo** rematch on October 8, at the Thomas and Mack Center in Las Vegas, is already causing fight fans to salivate. But wait until you hear what else may be on the card dubbed "World War II"—rematches involving junior lightweights **Jesus Chavez** and **Carlos Hernandez** and flyweights **Jorge Arce** and **Hussein Hussein**.

After Corrales-Castillo's memorable tilt on May 7, it was easy to stamp it as the 2005 Fight of the Year. But two other candidates for that honor are the first Arce-Hussein and Chavez-Hernandez battles. Arce beat Hussein on a bloody 10th-round TKO in March on the undercard of **Erik Morales'** exciting decision victory over **Manny Pacquiao**. Then came Chavez' stirring split-decision victory over Hernandez in their first go-around, which was part of the **Julio Caesar Chavez** "Adios Los Angeles" undercard in May.

Both of the original clashes were action-packed fights and could probably be main events on their own, but only hardcore boxing fans would notice. Putting them together with Corrales-Castillo II should garner a larger audience. Sadly, the first spine-tingling Corrales-Castillo brawl also failed to attract widespread attention. But the mainstream media finally woke up *after* the fight, so hopefully the rematch, along with the other two return bouts, will receive the attention they deserve.

Art Pelullo and **Gary Shaw** co-promoted the first Corrales-Castillo bout, along with Top Rank. Shaw and Top Rank's **Bob Arum** were reported to be finalizing a buyout option with Pelullo, the final step in putting together the World War II blockbuster, which will be televised by Showtime Pay-Per-View

Showtime completed its deals with Arum and Shaw, and according to ESPN.com, Arum secured a site fee in the $3-million to $4-million range from Las Vegas hotel magnate **Steve Wynn**, who recently opened the Wynn Las Vegas resort on the Vegas strip.

The whole card was still being finalized as this issue went to press, but those involved sounded very confident.

"Nothing is a definite, but we're trying to put that card all together, and it looks good," said Showtime Executive Producer **Jay Larkin**. "There are some issues to work out, though there are no significant obstacles, just some bumps we need to smooth out. I'm very optimistic that we will steer around those obstacles, because this is a card that wants to get made. If we can get everything finalized, and I think we can with all parties involved, this will certainly be in there among the best fights we've ever put on. From top to bottom, this card will certainly be a highlight."

LISTEN UP

Although the ongoing saga wasn't over as of press time, it's looking more and more like undefeated **Calvin Brock**, 26-0 (21), will be the next challenger for heavyweight champion **Vitali Klitschko**. If it is indeed Brock, THE RING's seventh-ranked contender, it is a valid choice. The college grad has been very active this year, fighting three times. His most impressive win came against **Jameel McCline**, on April 23, when he showed great poise in coming off the canvas and scoring a unanimous decision. That bout was part of ESPN's first foray into the pay-per-view world, so maybe a few people out there may actually know who Brock is, aside from the boxing cognoscenti … The best fight at 140, most would agree, is between junior welterweight world champion **Ricky Hatton** and number-one contender **Floyd Mayweather**. It is commonly thought that the big problem in making such a match is that Hatton is affiliated with Showtime, while Mayweather is an HBO fighter. Not so, says Showtime's Larkin. "We're not locked into anyone, but we do retain minimal rights to fighters, with matching rights and first negotiation rights, that's our general procedure," Larkin said. "We don't want to be in a position where Showtime is the network blamed for a big fight not happening, but I wouldn't mind having Hatton-Mayweather. I'd welcome that opportunity, stressing that Mayweather is a free agent and able to talk to us. Again, it's a one-fight, one-shot deal. It's always a one-shot deal with us. If a fighter is committed to you for more than one fight, your role has changed. We're an entertainment network that licenses fights, but once you get into that other area, that role becomes blurred." ■

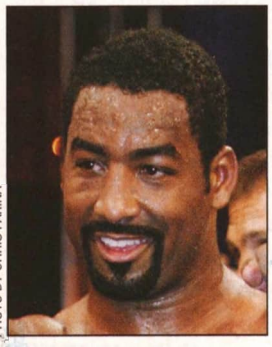


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Brock might get a shot against Klitschko

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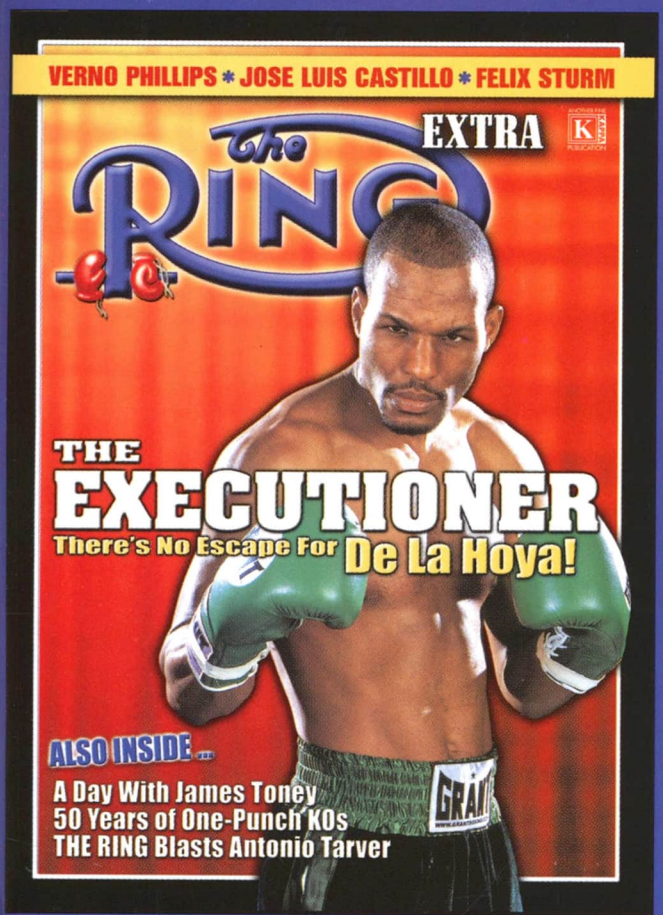

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